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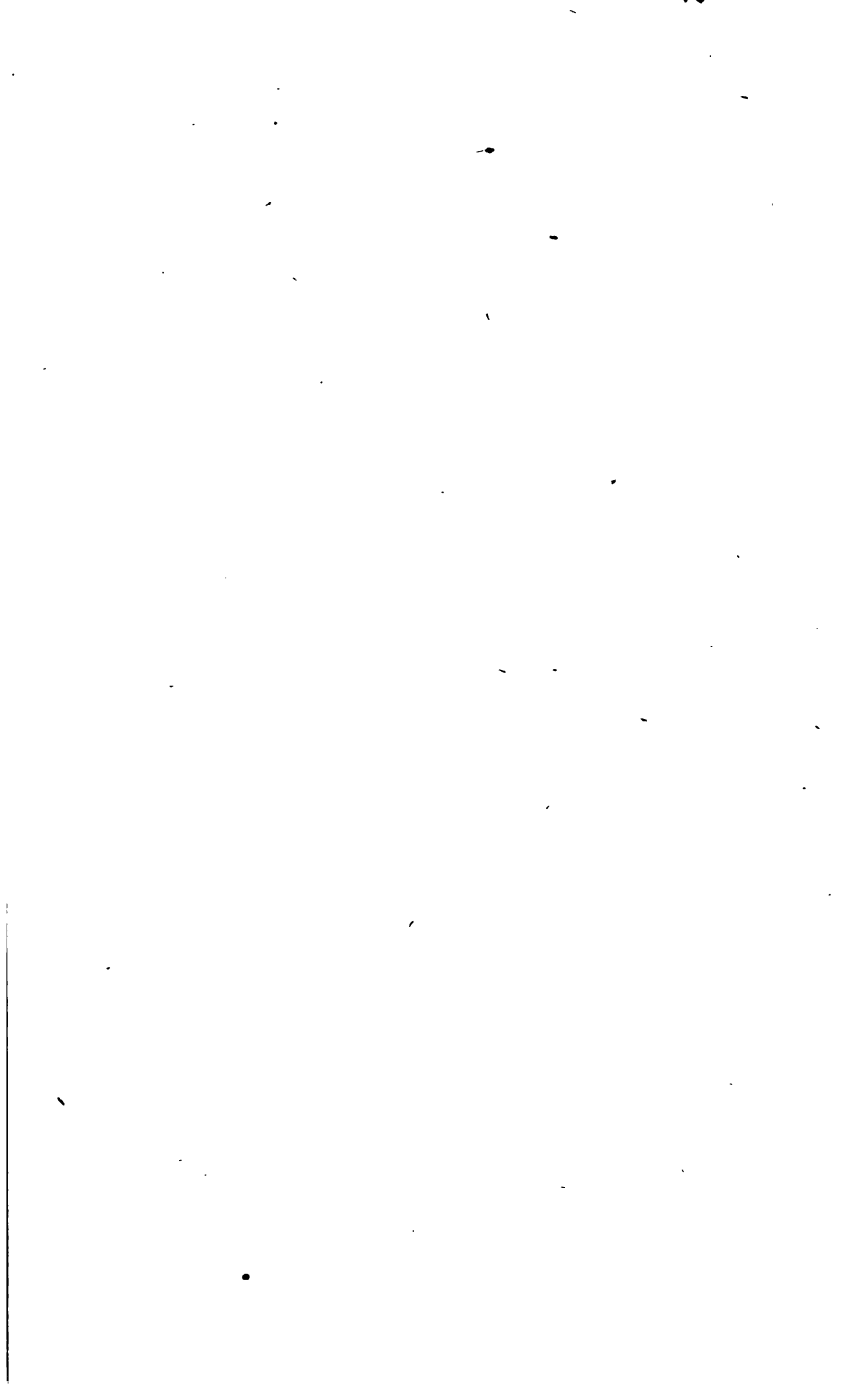
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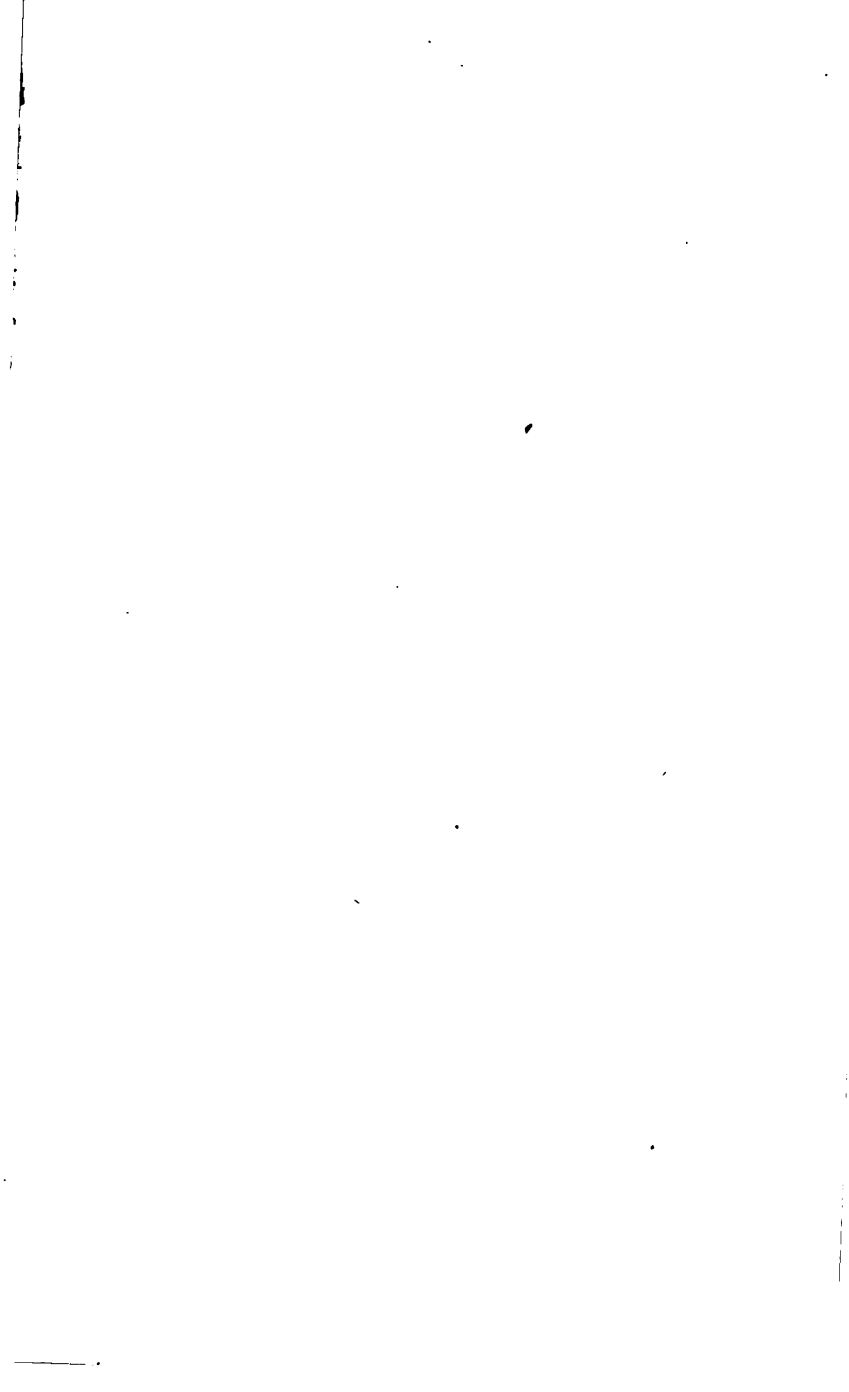
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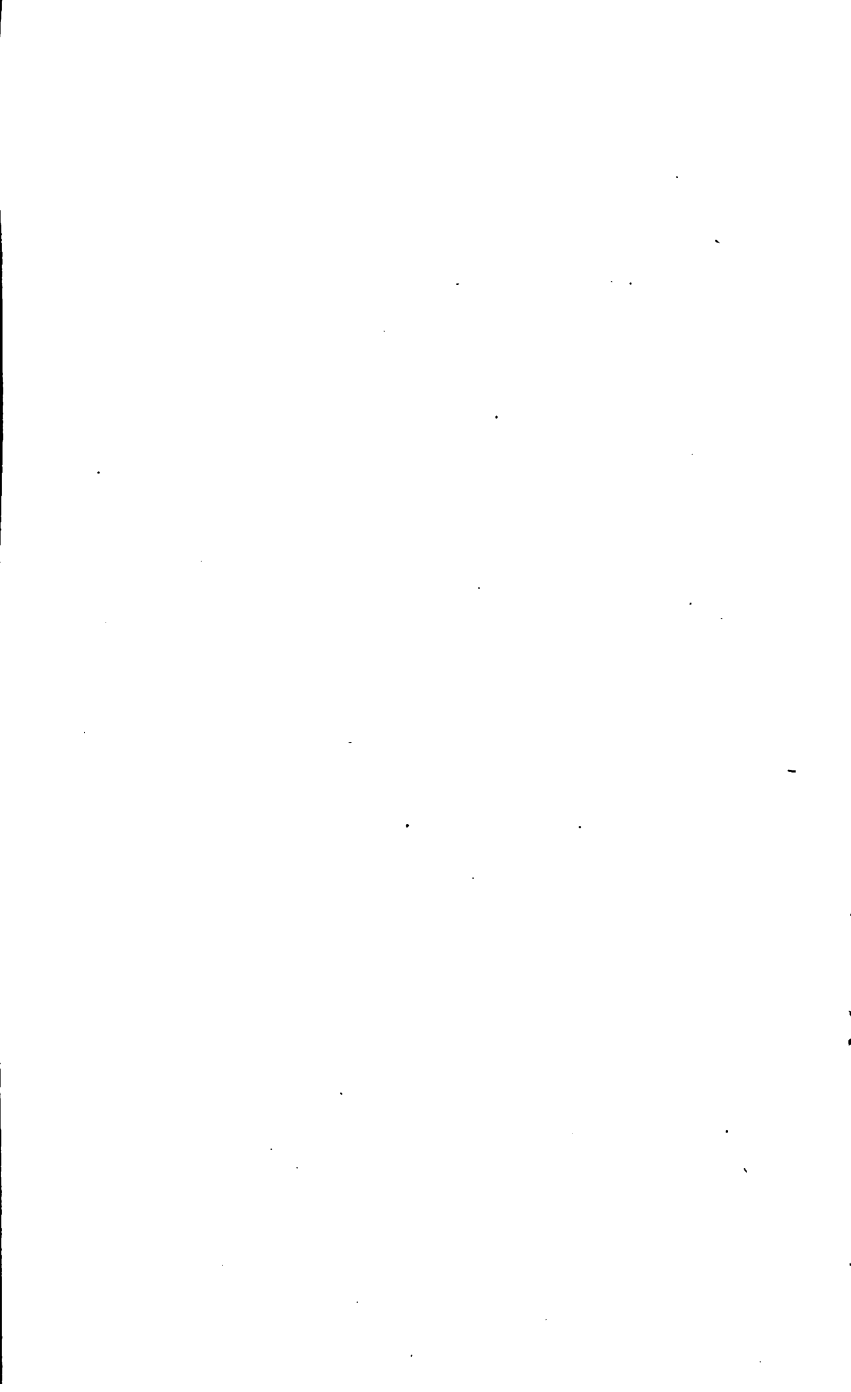
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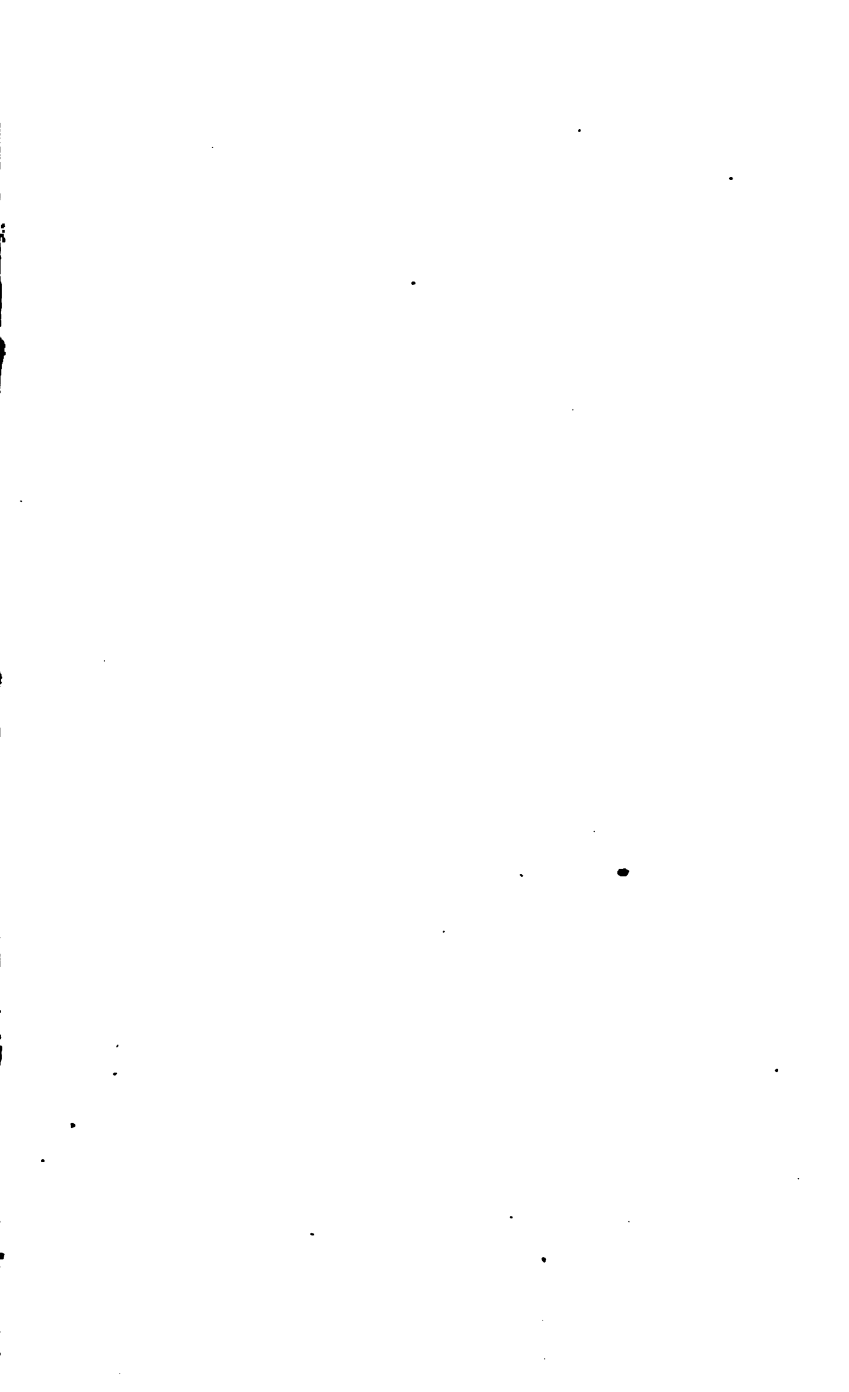


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# RHETORIC:

A TEXT-BOOK,

DESIGNED FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES,  
AND FOR PRIVATE STUDY.

BY REV. E. O. HAVEN, D.D., LL.D.,

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*Imago Animi Sermo est.*—SENECA.

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## PREFACE.

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**T**HIS work may be said to have grown, rather than to have been written for the purpose of making a book. Having used in the class-room, in academy and college, many of the text-books on Rhetoric, ancient and modern, foreign and American, and having instructed some classes without using a text-book, I have been most satisfied with the result when the method herein presented has been pursued. This book is therefore the result of actual experiment.

Abstruse arguments about style and oratory, about the conflicting theories of taste and beauty, about conviction and persuasion, and the laws of mind, and the philosophy of language, are all good and valuable in their place; but a student may read and repeat them with but little more effect on his own habits of speaking or power to write well, than he would receive from an equal amount of study in mathematics, medicine, or law, or any other subject.

At the same time, mere exercises in composition, on a series of topics presented, with a few outlines and directions, are too superficial to produce the desired result.

What the student needs is an orderly and perspicu-

ous presentation of the theory, with illustrations and directions how to profit by it.

Examples both for imitation and disapproval, in this work, have been drawn from modern as well as ancient writers, American as well as foreign—from some not widely known, as well as from the most celebrated.

As it regards the best use to be made of the book, I would respectfully suggest to teachers that students of Rhetoric should always combine practice with study, and should be required to produce either original or selected examples of every figure of speech, of every kind of composition, and of every style described. Once a week, perhaps, the class may present in writing specimens or illustrations of what has been studied during the week, and the exercises suggested in Part IV. should all be fairly wrought out after the previous parts have been studied. In this way the science and art are so welded together in the memory as to be of permanent value.

It is also an excellent exercise for a student to be required to present written criticisms of some productions, well-known or otherwise, according to the principles stated in the text-book. It is comparatively easy for a student to write when a definite subject is suggested to him. Rhetoric, like music, is eminently practical; and while theoretic study is indispensable, persistent, careful work is demanded.

## INTRODUCTION.

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**R**HETORIC is both a science and an art. In this respect, it is like all other subjects which embrace practice, founded upon rules that grow out of certain facts in the nature of things: such as Grammar, Architecture, Music, Painting, Medicine and Surgery, Land-surveying, Engineering, Navigation.

With reference to all such subjects there are two classes of persons: those who appreciate and approve a proper study of the theory as a basis of actual work, and those who insist that native genius alone is competent to reach the desired result.

The occasion for this diversity of opinion arises from the fact that there are men who have studied carefully practical sciences, but have not been able to achieve eminent success in actual work; and there are also men who have not studied the theory, who are still remarkably successful. The two extremes may be seen in some profound students; perhaps teachers of elocution, for instance, who can not make an effective extempore speech, or of Rhetoric, who can not write a popular book or essay; and in some who have never studied the theory of their profession, and are yet eminent as "natural painters," "natural musicians," and "natural bone-setters."



Occasionally, too, we meet with men who have carefully studied the science underlying some art, and have also become skillful in the practice, who seem to lose a consciousness of their obligation to study, and who undervalue and, perhaps, decry their own study.

It is a great misfortune to a young person to fall under the influence of such men. As Archbishop Hare well said, "It is, indeed, no small satisfaction to think, that whoever attacks learning, if he does it weakly, does it no hurt; and if he does it well, his own performance is a good argument against him; while he shows thereby its usefulness as well as his own ingratitude."\*

It is not to be denied that men differ in constitutional ability, and that many, without a close and systematic examination of the theory, have exhibited remarkable talent. But at the same time all who desire to excel in any art should study the science on which it is based as thoroughly and exhaustively as their opportunities will allow. They should become familiar with principles and with the best examples, and even with associated sciences. This course has been faithfully and laboriously pursued by the strongest and most efficient men. Thorough study will not restrain native genius, but develop and direct it; and if for a time it represses extravagance that might ex-

\* The works of the late Right Rev. and learned Archbishop Hare, Lord-bishop of Chichester (London, 1746), vol. i. p. 50. This applies to the depreciation of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, by Macaulay, a man who may be said to have been steeped in these sciences from his childhood, and who undervalued them, simply because he had been taught to obey them from his earliest life, and could not appreciate the value of studying them.

hibit strength, it will only lay the foundation for greater triumph.

Especially does this apply to Rhetoric. There have indeed been ignorant orators, but it does not follow that general information is not useful to a speaker. Battles have been fought and victories won with poor armor, and yet good armor is necessary, and for the want of it many a battle has been lost. There are strong temptations to superficiality, and to a spurious and limited facility in practice, that may easily be gained by the poorly prepared.

The ends of Rhetoric can not be acquired by the study of grammar alone, nor by general reading, nor by practice. It has rules based on the nature of language, and on the nature of mind, that have been reached and reduced to a system by the most thorough research, which can be mastered and employed only as the result of diligent effort.

Indeed it has been a favorite opinion of the most profound adepts in this science that only a virtuous man, under the noblest impulses of our nature, can attain the highest excellence in the art. It requires, for the fullest exhibition of its power, not only a well-trained, well-stored mind, but a heart full of generous, healthy emotion. Such was the opinion of Quintilian, and it has been repeated by many modern writers on Rhetoric.

In this book an attempt is made to present the science naturally, unencumbered by useless technicalities, or by discussions of side issues, that may be interesting to mature men, who alone can derive any direct

advantage from them in the improvement of their style of thought and utterance. Some works on Rhetoric exert no appreciable practical effect on the style of the student. This is not a work *about* Rhetoric, but endeavors to present the very elements of effective expression of thought and emotion. Its good results will depend largely upon the care with which the theory is studied, and upon the repeated efforts made by the student to produce for himself the various kinds of figures of speech and styles of composition analyzed and explained. This he should do, partly by the way of finding examples in his reading, and analyzing and classifying them, and partly by *inventing* original specimens.

Part I. explains the primary elements which composition employs: WORDS, with directions how to obtain a copious, and correct, and efficient vocabulary.

Part II. explains and illustrates another and more complicated class of the elements of expression, called FIGURES OF SPEECH AND THOUGHT.

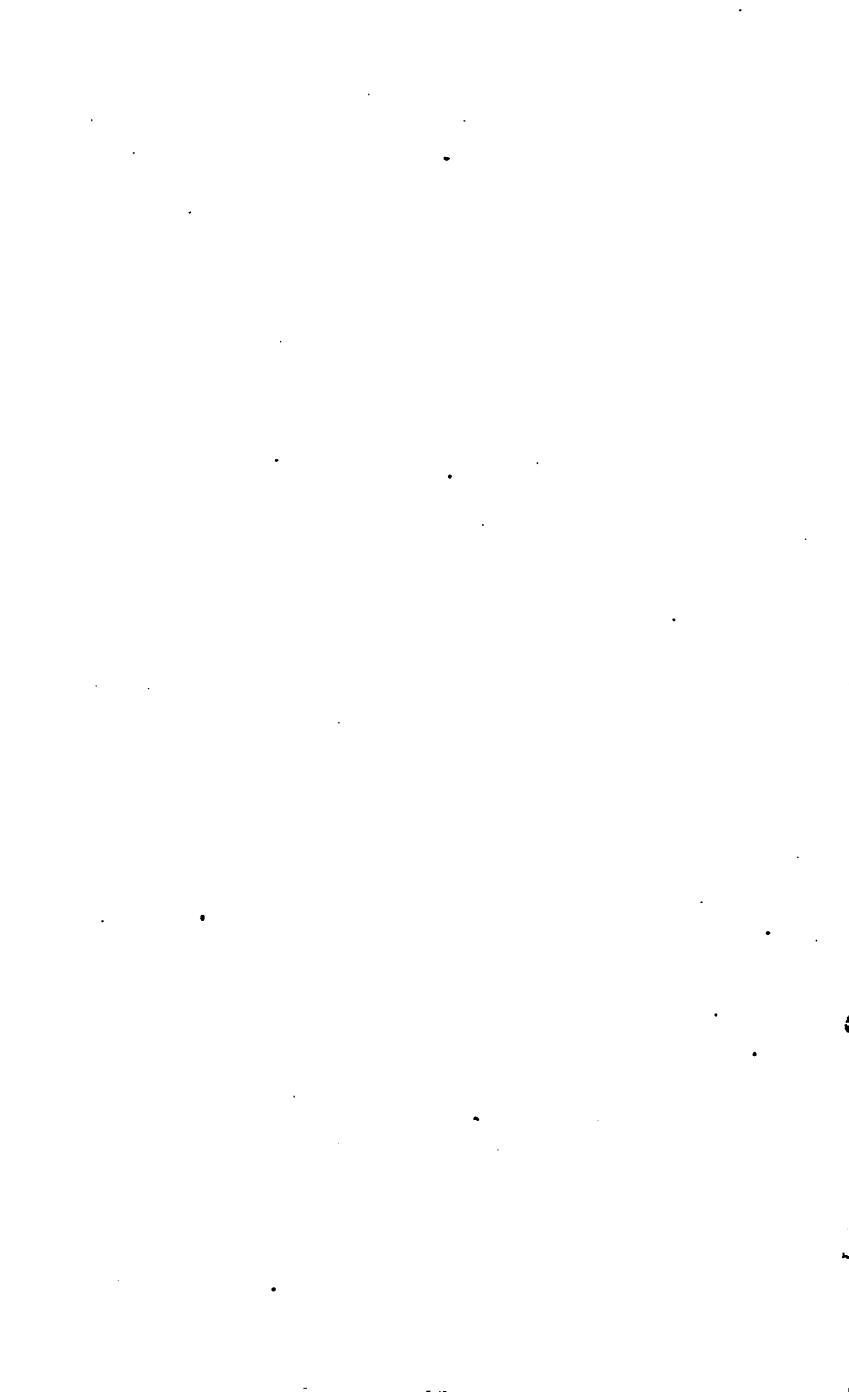
Part III. shows how these elements are combined and actually employed, and their result, in STYLE, and in the leading kinds of written and oral productions.

Long dissertations on the theory of TASTE, and the beautiful and sublime, are intentionally omitted, as belonging more appropriately to Mental Philosophy. The province of Logic, also, is not encroached upon by dissertations on the relations of thoughts to each other, and the laws of Conviction and Persuasion. Often rules are given under these heads that no writer regards in practice.

Part IV. naturally follows as an investigation of *INVENTION* as an art, showing how material may be best acquired and employed, according to previous directions.

Part V. contains some general principles and directions pertaining to *ELOCUTION*.

This is believed to comprehend what belongs properly to *Rhetoric*.



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PART I.

RHETORIC, AND ITS RELATION TO LANGUAGE.

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# RHETORIC.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL EXPRESSION OF THOUGHT AND FEELING.

1. *Definitions.*—RHETORIC is the science and art of expressing thought and feeling by language in the best possible manner.

Aristotle defined Rhetoric to be “the faculty of perceiving all the possible means of persuasion on every subject.” The object of a speaker or writer is sometimes, however, not to persuade, but to instruct or to amuse. Quintilian describes Rhetoric as the “science of speaking well;” a concise and beautiful definition, if it be understood also to include writing.

Speech is primarily uttered, but much is now written to be printed and read, perhaps silently, and Rhetoric embraces the rules by which language, whether uttered or written, may be the most effective. It is immaterial, generally, whether, in the discussion of these rules, the primary attention be directed to speaking or writing. When the nature of the subject



allows, both are included, though but one is mentioned.

2. *Natural Language*.—Thought and emotion may be communicated by one person to another by signs, such as motions of the hands; by inarticulate sounds, such as groans, shouts, sighs, and by touch. Many animals thus communicate with each other. This is called Natural Language.

Some of the methods of natural language are highly cultivated by men, and the use of some kinds of communication without language is often employed to add efficiency to uttered speech. The practice of impressing other minds by motions of the limbs, the eyes, and the countenance, has been so perfected as to become a good substitute for language in the transaction of important business.

Navigators are guided into proper channels, and warned against unseen rocks and other dangers, by lights of different colors and shape. The movement and size and intention of armies are communicated by the waving of flags of different form or color, as previously agreed upon. Trumpets, steam-whistles, and whatever makes a noise, may be used to convey thought. Telegraphy may exist without the use of words.

3. *Thought independent of Language*.—From the above, it is evident that thought and emotion can exist without language. Those who have asserted that man can not think without the use of language either have not comprehended the subject, or they have given to the term language a meaning more than properly belongs to it, and made it embrace all signs of

thought and feeling. The very brutes feel and think. Mankind can not be inferior to them.\*

4. *Language necessary to thorough and comprehensive Thought.*—But without articulate language the thoughts of men would be scanty and imperfect, and their emotions would be undeveloped and untrained. This is clearly ascertained from facts.

The deaf and dumb (speechless because they can

\* Lord Bacon thus presents his view of the possibility of thought without language: "The notes of things, then, which carry a signification without the help or intervention of words, are of two kinds: one, *ex congruo*, where the note has some congruity with the motion, the other, *ad placitum*, where it is adopted and agreed upon at pleasure. Of the former kind are hieroglyphics and gestures, of the latter, the real characters above mentioned. The use of hieroglyphics is very old. \* \* \* When Periander, being consulted how to preserve a tyranny, bade the messenger follow him, and went into his garden and topped the highest flowers, hinting at the cutting off of the nobility, he made use of a hieroglyphic just as much as if he had drawn it on paper. In the mean time it is plain that hieroglyphics and gestures have always some similitude to the thing signified, and are a kind of emblems—whence I have called them notes of things by congruity" (*Advancement of Learning*, book iv. chap. i.).

Sir William Hamilton styles the assertion that man can not think without language "a psychological hypothesis in regard to the absolute dependence of the mental faculties on language, once and again refuted" (*Ed. Rev.* vol. cxv. p. 208).

The art of pantomime, or of expressing character, thought, and action by attitudes, gestures, and motions, was highly cultivated by the Romans in their theatres. Some of the thought thus conveyed was instructive and ennobling, but often it was degrading and indecent, and therefore public pantomimic performances were severely denounced by the early Christian preachers. Macrobius, who lived in the early part of the fifth century after Christ, relates that Cicero, the famous orator, and Roscius, a famous actor, would often try together to ascertain which could express a thought the more eloquently, the one by words, and the other by gestures and motions.

not hear), however advanced in years, never have many thoughts till they learn *language*. They have no idea of life and death, of cause and effect, of reward and punishment. That beautiful system of instructing them, devised in modern times, and which itself is a great honor both to modern science and to Christianity, shows how indispensable words are, as the instruments of thought; for those mutes, who have never heard a sound, must learn words before they can possibly receive abstract ideas, such, for instance, as are expressed in the Lord's Prayer, or in the Constitution of the United States. These words they learn, as they learn to think, not imperceptibly, as hearing persons do, through articulate language, but slowly and laboriously.

No instance has yet been known in the whole history of the world of a human being who was taught to equal the average of children of ten years of age, in thought and emotion, without a knowledge of words. There have been poets and orators, learned mathematicians, astronomers, land-surveyors, and machinists without sight, skillful artists without hands, but no men of thought who could not understand and use words. Well did Quintilian exclaim, "How little does man's divine mind avail him if speech is denied!"\*

Words are the signs of thought. We learn the thoughts of others by words. We store up thoughts by the memory of words, or by writing them, to be compared, analyzed, and classified at our leisure. The basis of Rhetoric is a knowledge of words.

\* De Institutione Oratoria, lib. ii. cap. xvi.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE ORIGIN AND USE OF LANGUAGE.

5. *The Origin of Language.*—THE origin of language can not certainly be ascertained by investigation. The Holy Scriptures represent man as having language from the beginning. The theory that human beings were once a mute and almost thoughtless herd, like the brutes, is a figment of the imagination not based on historic evidence.

The various views of those who have endeavored to account for the origin of language may be reduced to these three theories:

- (1.) It was communicated to man by the Creator.
- (2.) It was the invention of man, previous to which the race may have lived without it, like dogs or cattle, hundreds and thousands of years.
- (3.) Man is so constituted that it is as instinctive for him to speak as it is for a beaver to construct a dam, or for a bee to store up honey.

The first and third views do not conflict with each other, and may both be correct, but the second is wholly imaginary and unphilosophical, and all who demand a basis of fact for their opinions to rest upon should decline to receive it.

It has even been conjectured by some that if a com-

pany of human beings could be left to grow up together from childhood without hearing a word uttered by any other person, they would naturally themselves construct a language. This, however, is only conjecture.\*

There is a wonderful uniformity in many of the languages spoken by men, and many philologists believe that all are variations from one original common speech.

6. *A Variety of Words necessary.*—Without wandering far into the field of conjecture, we can confidently assert that words are the necessary vehicles of mature and various thought. As the skillful painter must have on his easel materials for every color, and even every delicate shade, as the accomplished organist must have an instrument well-furnished with notes and stops, so must the speaker or writer have a copious supply of these airy yet permanent representatives of mental and moral action—words. Words are winged messengers, without which thoughts slumber in a silence that can not be distinguished from death. Without language, the body would be little better than a tomb for the soul.

7. *Natural Language itself not diminished, but im-*

\* Rev. Horace Bushnell, D.D., in his work entitled "God in Christ, with a Preliminary Dissertation on Language," published in Hartford in 1849, relates an instance of two twin boys in Connecticut who constructed a language for each other in infancy, and would not use their mother-tongue. Unfortunately one of them died, "and with him died, never to be spoken again, what, beyond any reason for doubt, was the root of a new original diversity of human speech—a new tongue." The instance is not given with sufficient fullness and definiteness to produce conviction.

*proved by Speech.*—So essential is speech to the thorough culture of the mind that it may be doubted whether natural language itself is not rendered by it more efficient than it possibly could have been without the cultivation secured by the use of words. The paintings and hieroglyphics of savages are indeed superior to the best pictorial illustrations that could have been produced by human beings wholly destitute of language; but how far short do the pictures made by savages fall of the paintings of a Raphael, or the illustrations that accompany modern scientific works!

7. *Word-painting.*—Word-painting, or the representation by language of what may be seen by the eye, often produces a more definite and vivid picture of the object than can be presented by sculpture or on the canvas, because, in addition to describing the mere superficial appearance, some words are used which suggest the feelings and thoughts both of the objects described, if they have any, and of the observer. Take, for instance, the following description of a dying gladiator, as described by Byron in *Childe Harold*, canto iv. stanza 140:

“I see before me the gladiator lie:  
 He leans upon his hand—his manly brow  
 Consents to death, but conquers agony,  
 And his drooped head sinks gradually low—  
 And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow  
 From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,  
 Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now  
 The arena swims around him—he is gone,  
 Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the wretch who  
 won.”

This beautiful description of a statue conveys more thought than the best executed specimen of sculpture, or even the actual facts presented to our senses, unless our own minds were capable of originating the reflections suggested to us by the writer.

8. *Comparative Power of Language and the imitative Arts in Description.*—An unprofitable controversy has arisen upon the question whether language, or painting and sculpture, which are called the “imitative arts,” can afford the most thorough and vivid description of an object. James Barry, in a lecture on painting, delivered before the British Royal Academy, says: “The Medicean Venus, the Farnese Hercules, and the Fighting Gladiator also, what is there in poetry (descriptive) that could supply the loss of them?” He adds: “Words, after all, are but words. They are but symbols formed for the eye out of twenty-four arbitrary scratches, called letters, and certain vibrations of the air occasioning certain irritations in our organ of hearing, which by national compacts are made to suggest the idea of existing things, with their several modes and degrees of relation; and though the communication of all this matter of compact is more or less perfect, according to the degrees of our education in it, yet how very imperfect it is, even at the best, will soon appear, on attempting to describe in mere words any individual complex forms, as the portrait or likeness of any man’s face, and numberless other matters which need not be mentioned. However, what language wants in precision, is abundantly compensated in the facility and extent of what it does commu-

nicate in the whole range of characters, manners, passions, sentiments, and intercourse of society.”\*

No naked description, by words, of a thing seen, can equal in vividness a correct picture, but it may contain much more information than can possibly be received directly through the sense of sight.

9. *Relation of Language to Mental Culture.*—Words have many shades and degrees of signification, varying with the mental cultivation of those who employ and hear them. A well-stored mind means more by the same terms than an ignorant one, and receives more meaning from the words of others. The best authors can not be appreciated except by persons equally learned, for the words are clothed with associations, allusions, and suggestions that are wholly invisible to the uneducated. A production, written or spoken, that conveys abundant valuable thought, generally evinces thorough culture.

Many animals can be taught at least a small part of the signification of several words when addressed to them. Some animals can be taught to articulate, but never to use language as a vehicle of thought.

A student may become thoroughly acquainted with the art of elocution, and yet be an inefficient speaker, for the want of knowledge and mental discipline; good elocutionists, so called, are often inefficient original orators, because they have feeble or uncultivated minds, or scanty information, or little genuine feeling; while writers that violate the fundamental principles

\* Lectures on Painting, by the Royal Academicians, Barry, Opie, and Fuseli (London, p. 115).



of Rhetoric will be read, and speakers that transgress elocution and even grammar will be listened to, simply from their abundance of thought and power. One acquainted with the rules of Rhetoric may be incompetent to write a valuable essay, or even a good letter to a friend, for the want of mental ability. Rhetoric can not supply the place of intellect and heart, but only shows how to use both most efficiently. An able speaker or writer needs thought, emotion, and language.

## CHAPTER III.

## HOW TO ACQUIRE THE KNOWLEDGE OF WORDS.

10. *Language learned in Childhood.*—THE first requisite of Rhetoric is to acquire a knowledge of words.

This knowledge is obtained, to a great extent, in our childhood from our parents and early companions. We hear words pronounced, we mark their significance, we imprint them upon our minds; they thus become vehicles of thought for our own use. Who may have uttered those words first is of no practical consequence to us. Some of them may have been used by the Romans two thousand years ago, and therefore be said to be derived from the Latin; others may have been used by the Greeks; others by the Normans; others by the modern French; others may have been always used from the creation of man till now; but whoever used them before us, they are now words of our language, and we learn their significance and power by hearing them pronounced.

11. *Language acquired by hearing and reading.*—By the sense of hearing alone it is possible to acquire an extensive and choice vocabulary, and to become ready and expert in the use of language. There have been many eloquent speakers who have thus acquired all their knowledge of language. In past ages, and among

ignorant people, undoubtedly there have been many able orators who could not write their names, and who could not read the alphabet. But the most efficient aid of the hearing now is the printed page. Many obtain their knowledge of all but a few common words from books. The words used in good books are more choice and correct, and more numerous than are heard except from the best speakers.

12. *The Number of Words in Use.*—The number of words heard and understood by children and youth generally is small. As the boundaries and the minuteness of their investigations enlarge, the number of words used must increase, to express the new objects and relations discovered, and the new thoughts and emotions awakened. Our knowledge is proportional to the number of words that we understand, each conveying a different thought; and our power of producing thought and feeling in others depends on the number of words that we can properly and promptly use in our addresses to them. . How can one who understands only a hundred words make an eloquent speech on a complicated subject, or write an instructive essay?

The number of independent words in the English language is estimated to be about forty thousand; though if we counted only those in ordinary use by well-educated speakers and writers, we should find not half so many; but if we reckon all that have been used by writers within the past two hundred years, we should find many more than that number.

13. *Natural and Artificial Modes of learning Lan-*

*guage*.—There are two methods of learning the meaning of words—the natural and the artificial.

The natural method is to listen to the words when uttered, and to observe what from their connection and from the appearance of the speaker, and from the consequences that follow, must be their meaning, and then ourselves, when occasion calls, to use the same words.

The artificial method is to study the meaning of words by the use of lexicons, grammars, and other books that define words, or to hear them explained by a teacher.

Both methods must be practiced to obtain so extensive a knowledge of words as good scholarship requires. Both may be combined by reading books written in a good style, and by never passing over an unfamiliar expression without obtaining a correct idea of the author's meaning by consulting a dictionary or some other aid.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SHORT AND EXPRESSIVE WORDS.

14. BY examining the English language closely, we observe that the most of its words are short, consisting of one syllable only or two. The most of these short words were used by those early inhabitants of England that migrated thither from parts of Germany, and were called Anglo-Saxons, and have been derived from the Anglo-Saxon language. Nearly all the primitive Anglo-Saxon words were short, and the longer words in the language were compound terms. Many of the Anglo-Saxon words are no longer used, and many other terms similar to them in brevity and force have been introduced from other sources. Indeed there seems to have been a great tendency in the formative ages of the English language to reduce long words to shorter and more easily remembered terms.

A large stock of these short words are understood by nearly all who speak the English language, and are first learned by children, and by all who become acquainted with the language by actual use. The most common objects have short names. The most highly educated persons, as well as others, employ them. Therefore, if properly and skillfully used in

oratory, poetry, or ordinary speech, they produce upon the people their full effect. The power to appreciate them is enjoyed by all, while some persons do not fully understand some of the longer and less familiar terms in our language.

The exact meaning of these condensed terms should be carefully studied, and the laws of their combination be examined, for a mastery over them gives great power to a writer or speaker. The Anglo-Saxon element of our language has not been sufficiently studied in our schools.

We give a few extracts to show the expressiveness of words of this kind. The first extract is a specimen of excellent composition, though translated from another language, in which it was uttered by Him "who spake as never man spake"—the Parable of the Prodigal Son :

"A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land ; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country ; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat : and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger ! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son : make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose and came to his father : But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and

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kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

Every word in this beautiful story is such as a child comprehends. The whole number of words in it is one hundred and forty-one, all of which but perhaps *divided*, *citizen*, and *compassion*, may be described as short, familiar words. Some of the others are indeed derived from the Latin, such as *portion*, *journey*, *substance*, *spent*, *joined*, *perish*; but these words have almost and, in some instances, quite supplanted their Anglo-Saxon equivalents, and are to the present generation of English-speaking people as familiar as any words of Saxon origin. It is a characteristic tendency of the English language to clip and shorten words from other languages, and reduce them to the type of simplicity and energy in which it delights. It is not necessary for the speaker to know their origin, that he may appreciate their force, any more than it is to know the origin of grains or fruits in order that they may nourish the body or please the palate.

Though the above specimen of composition, the Prodigal Son, has less than one hundred and fifty different words, it repeats some of the simplest of them many times, so as to have more than three hundred utterances. *And* is repeated more than thirty times, *he*, *to*, *the*, *have*, and other such words, many times. The word *living* is used in two different significations

—"And he divided unto them his *living*," meaning his property. And "wasted his substance with riotous *living*," or manner of life. Careful writers avoid the use of words in different meanings in the same sentences, or so near to each other as to lead to confusion of thought.\*

The following poem, written by Professor J. Addison Alexander, D.D., shows how much meaning may be conveyed by the skillful use of monosyllabic words alone:

"MONOSYLLABICS.

"Think not that strength lies in the big round word;  
 Or that the brief and plain must needs be weak.  
 To whom can this be true who once has heard  
 The cry for help, the tongue that all men speak,  
 When want, or woe, or fear is in the throat,  
 So that each word gasped out is like a shriek  
 Pressed from the sore heart, or a strange, wild note,  
 Sung by some fay or fiend? There is a strength  
 Which dies, if stretched too far or spun too fine,  
 Which has more weight than breadth, more depth than length.  
 Let but this force of thought and speech be mine,  
 And he that will may take the sleek fat phrase,  
 Which glows and burns not, though it gleam and shine—  
 Light, but no heat—a flash, but not a blaze!

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\* It may be interesting to note that, while in the English of the Prodigal Son about one hundred and fifty different words are employed, the original Greek makes use of less than one hundred; and while in English there are more than three hundred utterances, in the Greek there are less than two hundred and fifty, and yet both cover about the same space, or require the same time for repetition. This illustrates the fact that in English shorter words are used and more frequently repeated, while the Greek varies and compounds its original words more.



"Nor is it mere strength that the short word boasts ;  
 It serves of more than fight or storm to tell,  
 The roar of waves that clash on rock-bound coasts,  
 The crash of tall trees when the wild winds swell,  
 The roar of guns, the groans of men that die  
 On blood-stained fields. It has a voice as well  
 For them that far off on their sick beds lie :  
 For them that weep, for them that mourn the dead ;  
 For them that laugh and dance, and clap the hand ;  
 To joy's quick step, as well as grief's slow tread,  
 The sweet plain words we learnt at first keep time ;  
 And though the theme be sad, or gay, or grand,  
 With each, with all, these may be made to chime,  
 In thought, or speech, or song, or prose, or rhyme."

In the above remarkable production, consisting of two hundred and eighty syllables, each being a word, one hundred and sixty-six different words are employed, the most of them occurring only once. This serves to show the great power of the monosyllabic part of our language.

It does not at all detract from the force of the composition that, while nearly all of the words are of Anglo-Saxon, or at least Teutonic origin, some are Celtic, and some are Latin, and some Greek. A child never asks the origin of a word that he hears; but if it is short, and expresses a thought of frequent occurrence, it is easily remembered. *Brief, round, press, strange, force, mere, serves, stain, voice, chime, prose,* are from the Latin, *phrase* and *theme* are from the Greek; but they are as forcible as *strength, help, speak*, and the others of Anglo-Saxon origin.

Many of the most highly esteemed writers of the English language employ mostly short, simple, and ex-

pressive words. We give another brief specimen to illustrate the power of words of this kind.

EXTRACT FROM AN ADDRESS BY DANIEL WEBSTER TO SOME AGED SOLDIERS OF THE REVOLUTION.

“Venerable men! You have come down to us from a former generation. Heaven has bounteously lengthened out your lives that you might behold this joyous day. You are now where you stood fifty years ago, this very hour, with your brothers and your neighbors, shoulder to shoulder, in the strife for your country. Behold, how altered! The same heavens are indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all else, how changed!”

The simplicity and appropriateness of the language of this address will be appreciated and admired by all persons of good taste.

Without caricaturing the opposite kind of style, we will translate the above into language such as many more pompous but feeble speakers would have employed, in order that the superior merits of the simple style, at least for such an occasion as called forth the above, may be observed.

“Venerable gentlemen! You have descended to us from an antecedent generation. Heaven has bounteously prolonged your career, that your vision might embrace this exultant epoch. You are now where you stood half a century ago, at this very instant, with your fraternal associates and intimate acquaintances, shoulder to shoulder, in the contest for your nation. Behold, how transformed! The same firmament is indeed over your heads; the same ocean rolls at your feet; but all other things, how transformed!”

The weakness and flatness of these long words, compared with the nervous original, none can fail to see.

15. *Abundant Thought requisite to render a simple Style agreeable.*—At the same time it should not be forgotten that one quality is essential to a style in which

these short and familiar words abound, to make the production impressive and valuable, and that is, abundance of thought and feeling, or both. Without this, the production is not only uninteresting but puerile. It is only writers who abound in thought that can safely employ a simple style.

16. *Scientific Productions in Popular Language.*—Scientific productions usually employ technical terms, but many of late have been written in popular language. Professor Agassiz, though his native language is French, employs a style in English, that may be regarded as a model of simplicity, perspicuity, and force. We give a brief specimen :

“Before the year 1800, men had never suspected that their home had been tenanted in past times by a set of beings totally different from those that inhabit it now ; still farther was it from their thought to imagine that creation after creation had followed each other in successive ages, every one stamped with a character peculiarly its own. It was Cuvier who, aroused to new labors by the hint he received from Montmartre, to which all his vast knowledge of living animals gave him no clue, established, by means of most laborious investigations, the astounding conclusion that, prior to the existence of the animals and plants now living, this globe had been the theatre of another set of beings, every trace of whom had vanished from the surface of the earth. \* \* \* The solid crust of the earth gave up its dead, and from the snows of Siberia, from the soil of Italy, from caves of Central Europe, from mines, from the rent sides of mountains and from their highest peaks, from the coral-beds of ancient oceans, the varied animals that had possessed the earth ages before man was created spoke to us of the past.”

The basis of the above style consists of plain and purely English words, while those of later origin, and derived from the Latin and other languages, are sparingly used, when precision and elegance seem to require them.

## CHAPTER V.

LONG WORDS, AND DIRECTIONS UPON THE CHOICE  
OF WORDS.

17. BESIDES the shorter and, on the average, most expressive words, there are many longer ones which have been introduced from the Latin, Greek, and other languages. These constitute about one-fourth of the terms found in English dictionaries, but very seldom reach so high a proportion in the language of any author. Some of them are the only single terms in the language to express the thoughts for which they stand, and therefore must be used when those thoughts are to be expressed; others bear nearly the same meaning as older and shorter words, but are generally esteemed as more elegant or sonorous, or indicative of higher culture, and are therefore often preferred.

The earlier writers of the English language, when it had fairly supplanted the Anglo-Saxon language, were for the most part familiar with the Latin, and introduced into their written compositions many words that the people had not been accustomed to hear. The words were mostly English in form, Latin in fact. It was positively necessary either that they should introduce such words, or that they should combine the familiar Anglo-Saxon words into new com-

pound terms, for new ideas were awakened which the old simple words would not express. Many compound words were formed, and many were transferred to our language from the Latin, and subsequently from the Greek, and from other languages.

Both as a description, and, to some extent an illustration, of this practice, the following extract from a work of Lord Bacon is given, entitled "The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning," published first in 1605:

"Thereof grew again a delight in this manner of style and phrase, and an admiration of that kind of writing which was much furthered and precipitated by the enmity and opposition that the propounders of those primitive, but seeming new opinions, had against the school-men, who were generally of the contrary part, and whose writings were altogether in a different style and form, taking liberty to coin and frame new terms of art to express their own sense, and to avoid circuit of speech, without regard to the pureness, pleasantness, and, as I may call it, lawfulness, of the phrase or word. And again, because the great labor then was with the people, for the winning and persuading of them, there grew of necessity, in chief price and request, eloquence and variety of discourse, as the fittest and forciblest access into the capacity of the vulgar sort; so that these four causes concurring, the admiration of ancient authors, the hate of the school-men, the exact study of languages, and the efficacy of preaching, did bring in an affected study of eloquence and *copia* of speech which then begun to flourish."

Afterward, on this same subject, Bacon adds:

"How is it possible but this should have an operation to discredit learning, even with vulgar capacities, when they see learned men's works, like the first letter of a patent or limned book, which, though it hath large flourishes, yet it is but a letter? It seems to me that Pygmalion's frenzy\* is a good emblem or portraiture of their variety;

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\* Pygmalion, a character described in Grecian story, who is said to have made a statue and fallen in love with it after it was endowed with life.

for words are but the images of matter; and except they have life of reason and invention, to fall in love with them is all one as to fall in love with a picture."

Writings in which long and sonorous terms abound are sometimes said to be in the "Johnsonian style," from the character of the productions of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., the author of a "Dictionary of the English Language," whose vocabulary was extensive, and effectively employed. The following sentence illustrates his style:

"That affluence and power, advantages extrinsic and adventitious, and, therefore, easily separable from those by whom they are possessed, should very often flatter the mind with expectations of felicity which they can not give, raises no astonishment; but it seems rational to hope that intellectual greatness should produce better effects; that minds qualified for great attainments should first endeavor to secure their own benefit; and that they who are most able to teach others the way to happiness should, with most certainty, follow it themselves."

Mr. Macaulay, criticising Johnson's style, says: "When he talked, he clothed his wit and his sense in forcible and natural expressions. As soon as he took his pen in hand to write for the public, his style became systematically vicious. All his books are written in a learned language—in a language which nobody hears from his mother or his nurse—in a language in which nobody ever quarrels, or drives bargains, or makes love—in a language in which nobody ever thinks. It is clear that Johnson himself did not think in the dialect in which he wrote. \* \* \*

"His constant practice of padding out a sentence with useless epithets till it became as stiff as the bust of an exquisite; his antithetical forms of expression

constantly employed even where there is no apposition in the things expressed; his big words wasted on little things; his harsh inversions, so widely different from those graceful and easy inversions which give variety, spirit, and sweetness to the expression of our great old writers—all these peculiarities have been imitated by his admirers and parodied by his assailants till the public has become sick of the subject.”\*

His definition of “net-work” in his dictionary illustrates this style as follows: “Any thing reticulated or decussated with interstices at equal distances between the intersections.”

18. *When the Johnsonian Style is allowable.*—When the thought is valuable and impressive, the use of ponderous and majestic words is eminently appropriate. The advantages of learning are now so widely disseminated that a much larger proportion of the public appreciate such language. Certain minute shades of thought may be expressed by it alone, and there are occasions when good taste pronounces it appropriate and indispensable. Therefore all scholars should obtain a mastery over it.

19. *A Variety in this Matter to be cultivated.*—The best writers employ a great variety of words, not confining themselves to the Anglo-Saxon or to the Latinized style. Much depends upon the nature of the subject, the character of the audience addressed, and the purpose of the author, whether to instruct, convince, or amuse. The most forcible expressions in

\* Macaulay's *Miscellaneous Writings*: article, “Boswell's Life of Johnson.”

the language are short and direct; longer words are often more harmonious and elegant.

Upon the propriety of using words derived from the Latin and Greek, a great difference of opinion is entertained. A modern writer of some notoriety has said:

"Our great scholars have corrupted the English language by a jargon so uncouth that a plain man can hardly discern the real lack of ideas which their barbarous and mottled dialect strives to hide. \* \* \* There can be but little doubt that the principal reason why well-educated women write and converse in a purer style than well-educated men is because they have not formed their taste according to those ancient classical standards, which, admirable as they are in themselves, should never be introduced into a state of society unfitted for them. To this may be added that Cobbett, the most racy and idiomatic of all our writers, Erskine, by far the greatest of our forensic orators, knew little or nothing of any ancient language, and the same observation applies to Shakspeare."\*

The style of Erskine was also complimented by the famous orator, Rufus Choate, who in conversation said: "Erskine got along not by wide scope and reach of rich allusion and thought, but by a beautiful voice, emotional temperament, and the *richest English*, taken from Shakspeare and Milton."†

The following extract from a speech of Mr. Erskine

\* History of Civilization in England. By Henry Thomas Buckle (London, 1857, vol. i. p. 744).

† Reminiscences of Rufus Choate, the Great American Advocate. By Edward G. Parker (Boston, 1860, p. 263).



is a good specimen of his style, and shows that he was not by any means limited to common and colloquial terms:

“Gentlemen, I can not conclude without expressing the deepest regret at all attacks upon the Christian religion by authors who profess to promote the civil liberties of the world. For under what other auspices than Christianity have the lost and subverted liberties of mankind in former ages been reasserted? Under what other sanctions, even in our own days, have liberty and happiness been spreading to the uttermost corners of the earth? What work of civilization, what commonwealth of greatness has this bald religion of nature ever established?”

Careful study will show that the compliments upon the style of Erskine are extravagant. His words were few, and not the best chosen, and a wider range of study, though he was evidently familiar with Latin, would have much improved both his thoughts and style.

Dr. Johnson himself gave perhaps the best defense of his own style that can be given, though in his earnestness he seems to have deviated from it, when he said, “Big thinkers require big words.”\*

Those who recommend the exclusive employment of either the simpler or the more complex words of our rich English language, both err. The short simple words undoubtedly make the deepest impression, while the longer words contribute to copiousness, elegance, and accuracy. The student should obtain a mastery over both.

Of the Johnsonian style, Dr. Whately says: “It

\* See Lord Brougham's *Rhetorical Dissertations* (London Edition, 1856, p. 206).

happens, unfortunately, that Johnson's style is particularly easy of imitation, even by writers utterly destitute of his vigor of thought; and such imitators are intolerable. They bear the same resemblance to their model that the armor of the Chinese, as described by travellers, consisting of thick quilted cotton covered with stiff glazed paper, does to that of the ancient knights: equally glittering and bulky, but destitute of the temper and firmness which was its sole advantage. At first sight, indeed, this kind of style appears far from easy of attainment, on account of its being remote from the colloquial, and having an elaborately artificial appearance; but in reality there is none less difficult to acquire. To string together *substantives* connected by conjunctions, which is the characteristic of Johnson's style, is, in fact, the rudest and clumsiest mode of expressing our thoughts: we have only to find *names* for our ideas, and then put them together by connectives, instead of interweaving, or rather *felt-ing* them together, by the admixture of verbs, participles, prepositions, etc. So that this way of writing, as contrasted with the other, may be likened to the primitive rude carpentry, in which the materials were united by coarse external implements, pins, nails, and cramps, when compared with that art in its most improved state, after the invention of dove-tail joints, grooves, and mortises, when the junctions are effected by forming properly the extremities of the pieces to be joined, so as at once to consolidate and conceal the juncture."\*

\* Whately's Rhetoric, part iii. chap. ii. § 8.

On this subject Ralph Waldo Emerson remarks: "In Parliament, in pulpits, in theatres, when the speakers rise to thought and passion, the language becomes idiomatic; the people in the street best understand the best words."\*

\* Emerson's *English Traits*, p. 104.

## CHAPTER VI.

## HOW TO OBTAIN A GOOD VOCABULARY.

20. *Degrees of Memory in Relation to Language.*—

THERE is a great difference between such a knowledge of a word as enables a person to understand its meaning when it is either heard or read, and such a mastery over it as enables the person to command it either in speech or rapid writing. Many persons can understand the most of what is uttered to them in familiar conversation in a foreign language who can not express themselves readily and correctly in that language. Thousands of scholars can read foreign languages who could not write a page of them accurately. A speaker who uses many and elegant words will often interest and delight an auditory of *uneducated* persons, not one of whom could use the words which he hears and understands, and some of which perhaps he never heard before.

21. *Analysis of Memory.*—The faculty of memory, when analyzed, is found to embrace acquisition, retention, and reproduction. First, the knowledge must be acquired; second, it must be retained, and, finally, it must be reproduced when needed.

Each of these departments of the memory can be strengthened only by attention and exercise. Each

particular department must be specially exercised. The acquisition of words can be secured by a study of dictionaries, by accurately observing every new term that is heard or seen, and particularly by translating from one language into another. It should be heeded by the student that a familiarity with words can not be secured accidentally, any more than any other valuable power.

In like manner words, once comprehended and stored in the memory, must be *employed frequently*, or they will not be ready to do the bidding of their master when needed. The frequent and careful use of the pen is a great aid to the memory. The oft-quoted apothegm of Bacon should be regarded: "Reading maketh a full man, conference [conversation or use] a ready man, and writing an exact man."

22. *Advice of Bacon*.—The following advice of this illustrious author, though comprehending more than directly applies to the present subject, is all pertinent to a study of Rhetoric:

"If a man write little, he had need have a great memory; if he confer little, he had need have a present wit; and if he read little, he had need have much cunning, to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; the mathematics, subtile; natural philosophy, deep, moral, grave; logic and rhetoric, able to contend."

In the above extract, the careful reader will note that several words are used with a signification that is now either obsolete or not common. They are, "*had need have*" for *needs to have*, "*confer*" for *converse*, "*cunning*" for *skill*, "*that*" for *that which* or *what*.

This illustrates the changes in the meaning and use of words gradually introduced into the language.

23. *Further Advice on Cultivating a Remembrance of Words.*—To obtain a knowledge of words and a facility in their employment, it is a commendable practice never to pass over a word in reading without a thorough perception of its meaning, and to employ in speaking or writing as great a variety of choice and appropriate terms as can be commanded, provided that none are used superfluously. Also, while it is profitable to study carefully other languages, no person should presume to consider himself well educated, without having spent much time, not only in the study of the grammar, but in the special and severe study of the words of his own language.

24. *Advice of Choate on Choice of Words.*—Mr. Choate, whose opinion on the style of Erskine has already been quoted, was himself the master of a rich, copious, and highly-ornamented style, which could not have been acquired without the patient study of words. His opinion on this subject is worthy of notice:

“The culture of *expression* should be a *specific study*, quite distinct from the invention of thought. Language and its elements, words, are to be mastered by direct, earnest labor. A speaker ought *daily* to exercise and *air* his vocabulary, and also to add to and enrich it. Translations should be pursued with these *two objects*, to bring up to the mind and employ all the words you already *own*, and to tax and *torment* invention and discovery, and the very deepest memory, for additional, rich, and admirably-expressive words. In translating, the student should not put down a word till he has thought of at least *six synonyms*, or varieties of expression, for the idea. Dictionaries are of great service in this filling up and fertilizing of dic-

tion. You do not want a diction gathered from the newspapers, caught from the air, common and unsuggestive ; but you want one whose every word is full freighted with *suggestions and associations*, with beauty and power.”\*

The last suggestion will be felt by every good student. A stream can not rise higher than the fountain. Those who read only inferior productions, and listen only to poorly-educated speakers, will imbibe their imperfect style. Every student should read the books of classic reputation in his own language, and *laboriously and discriminatingly* select words when attempting to express his own thoughts.

The young writer should devote time and study to the art of composition, and should write and rewrite his productions carefully, and read and repeat them frequently, to acquire correctness, copiousness, and readiness in expression.

\* *Reminiscences of Rufus Choate*, pp. 248, 249.

## CHAPTER VII.

## DISCRIMINATION IN THE USE OF WORDS.

25. *Synonymous Words*.—THE English language is remarkably rich in words. As it readily receives and assimilates terms from any other language with which it comes in contact, it employs many words that have nearly the same signification. Words having precisely the same signification are called synonymous words, and the term is sometimes extended so as to embrace words that differ but slightly in meaning. *Swiftness* and *velocity*, *brotherly* and *fraternal*, *yearly* and *annual*, *stay* and *continue*, *abide* and *remain*, *hint* and *suggest*, *wave* and *billow*, are specimens of words that so closely resemble each other in signification as to be called synonymous. Inferior and careless speakers recognize no distinction in the meaning of such words. If we consult our dictionaries, we find that a large majority of the words in the language are defined or explained simply by the use of other single words that are supposed to bear a meaning nearly identical with the words defined.

26. *Slight Diversity in the Meaning of Synonymous Words*.—Careful scrutiny will show that in all instances these words really differ in meaning, though sometimes by a slight shade, imperceptible to an uneducated mind. As the musical ear is trained to dis-



criminate between similar sounds, and the eye of a painter to distinguish similar colors, so an educated mind will recognize a difference in the rank or comprehensiveness of words called synonymous. Correct and elegant writers and speakers recognize and observe these facts, and even ignorant readers are charmed by this discrimination and accuracy, though they know not the origin of their pleasure, and can not themselves command such power.

*Swiftness*, for instance, is a pure English word, coming down from the Anglo-Saxon, and universally understood. It is the exact opposite of slowness. *Velocity* is from the Latin, and is more elegant, but less forcible, and may even apply to objects moving slowly. We may say "a slow velocity," but not "a slow swiftness." And yet *velocity* is used to denote the very greatest degree of swiftness ever exhibited, as when we speak of the velocity of a cannon-ball, or of lightning, or of the celestial bodies; *velocity* is therefore much more comprehensive than *swiftness*. Such facts can be learned only by very careful and discriminating reading, which is aided by a study of other languages, ancient and modern; but a close attention to the practice of the most approved authors in our own language will largely supply the want of acquaintance with the Anglo-Saxon, Latin, Greek, and other languages from which the English is derived. *Brotherly* and *fraternal* are almost exactly the same, the former being Anglo-Saxon, and the latter Latin. If they differ at all, it is in the slightly superior definiteness and force of the former. *Horse* and

*steed* differ in rank. *Horse* is the common word, *steed* is the poetical word. *Nag* means an inferior horse, or one spoken of familiarly, as of little esteem.

It is a profitable exercise to scrutinize words closely, and to note the different effect of a sentence if a few words are exchanged for others of a similar meaning.

27. *Technical Terms*.—Many technical terms, or words used in a very precise sense, in the description of the sciences and arts, have been introduced into the English language, mainly from the ancient languages. In this way our speech has been greatly enriched. No science or art can be studied, or even thoroughly understood, without a knowledge of its technical terms. The common English words nearest in signification to them are too elastic and changeable in their signification to answer the purpose of those who are describing the arts and sciences.

Thus, Grammar has such technical terms as *participle*, *prosody*, *subject*, *predicate*; Geography such as *latitude*, *longitude*; Astronomy such as *nodes*, *parallax*, *transit*; Geology such as *silurian*, *carbonaceous*, *drift*; Metaphysics such as *subjective*, *objective*, *nominalism*, *realism*; Medicine, Law, Theology, Teaching, Painting, Sculpture, Navigation, War, Building, Mining, and all sciences and all practices, make use of a certain set of terms respectively, employed in a definite signification, and which, when used on other subjects, have generally a wider or looser signification than when employed technically.

28. *Origin of Technical Terms*.—While the technical terms of the natural sciences are mostly taken from

the Greek, those of war are derived largely from the French, those of music from the Italian, and many others are from other languages, ancient and modern. In some instances, an English word is selected and closely defined in a treatise, and thus becomes technical.

29. *How used.*—No one should presume to write upon any particular science or art without an *accurate* knowledge of its technical terms; and it is well even in unscientific or popular productions to use such terms accurately, if at all. An excessive or unnecessary use of them, even in scientific writings, and still more so in those designed for general readers, appears pedantic, and should be avoided.

30. *New Words.*—From time to time new words spring up in the language, and old words die out or become obsolete. The scrutinizing observations of modern science are constantly discovering new objects, which must be named, and therefore scientific terms are constantly added to the language. So new combinations of men, new actions, or circumstances arise, which demand either an old term used in a new signification or a new term. Such words as *caucus*, *locate*, *donate*, *pre-empt*, *immigrant*, *skedaddle*, *telegram*, *freshet*, *sleigh*, and many others were used first in America, and some of them are still confined to America. *Wigwam*, *tomahawk*, originated among the aborigines of North America; *taboo*, *tattoo*, came from the Pacific Islands. These are but specimens of the foreign words continually admitted into our language.

More will be said hereafter about the proper use of new words.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## FAULTS TO BE AVOIDED.

31. THE faults to be avoided in the use of words are as follows:

(1). *Paucity*.—To endeavor to speak or write without a good supply of words is as absurd as to endeavor to till the earth without the necessary implements of agriculture, or to build a house without sufficient material. We need not resume the inquiry whether thought can exist without language, for all will allow that Rhetoric demands words. A writer may endeavor to make a few words express much thought, and fail either to develop his own thoughts into fullness and accuracy, or to make any but the most indistinct and unsatisfactory impression upon others, for the want of a sufficient copiousness of words. In such a case, the same word, on the same page, or in one production, is made to bear more than one meaning, sometimes several meanings. The emphasis and gesture which might indicate the different meanings when uttered, can not be denoted on the silent, passionless page, and the reader, uninstructed and confused, pronounces the writer unskilled and feeble, and probably throws the book down in disgust. Speakers who have but few words can not interest sensible hearers a long

time. Always employ words enough to convey your meaning fully and perspicuously, and avoid the use of the same word in different significations.

The following may be regarded as examples of a violation of this rule:

“A *right* action being one conformed to the law, we may *rightly* say the actor had a *right* to perform it, *i. e.*, the law given laid it upon him as a duty. And thus we come at once, as it were, abruptly to a *right* definition of *duty*, *i. e.*, a thing due, which must be done—which the law requires me to do. Thus we reach the doctrine that rights and duties are *reciprocal*.”

The above is confused and obscure, if not illogical. Better thus:

“A right action being one conformed to the law, we may *properly* say that the actor has a right to perform it; and if the law-giver demands activity, he has *imposed* it as a duty upon *the actor*. Thus we come at once, and abruptly, to a *correct* definition of duty: it is an *action* due, or that must be done; or, in other words, which the law requires an *agent* to do. Thus we reach the conclusion that rights and duties are *reciprocal*.”

The following passage is susceptible of great improvement:

“And yet, with so urgent a need to be free from every intemperate stain and weakness, is it not almost proverbially true that, in the ranks of nominal students, there seems to be an especial liability to fall into some form or another of sickly and enslaving indulgence; it seems often as though the soul made just effort enough to rise and be strong to show its weakness. Hence their restlessness oftentimes in their seeming attempt of divorce from the flesh; hence dram-drinking and sottish eating of precious good things; hence smoking and chewing, and all sorts of vicious and consuming lusts, so often appear, as it were, in very mockery and derision of the professed attempt of studious men to train up their souls in power and freedom, in reason as one with the end and substance of their noble being.”

Strong as the above sentiment is, it seems to be

expressed in a kind of stilted simplicity. Would it not be more elegant and even impressive thus?

“ And yet, with so urgent a necessity of being free from every stain and enfeebling influence of intemperance, is it not almost proverbially true that many who call themselves students are especially prone to fall into some enfeebling and enslaving indulgence? The souls of such men often seem to have striven to rise just enough to demonstrate their imbecility. Hence their restlessness often, in their abortive efforts to escape from their enslavement to the flesh. Hence dram-drinking, smoking and chewing of tobacco, and all sorts of vicious and destructive lusts so often appear to mock and deride those men who profess to be attempting by study to train up their souls in power and freedom in obedience to reason, as the very end and completion of their nobler being.”

It is difficult to expose this defect except by re-writing and adding to those productions in which it appears to be exhibited. An abundance of words, properly used, indicates abundant thought.

Many speakers are doomed to inferior influence, many books pass rapidly into oblivion, from the want of a sufficiently extensive vocabulary.\*

At the same time, the frequent repetition of a word in the same discourse, or even paragraph, is allowable for emphasis, as is illustrated by the use of the word *hypothesis* in the following extract from Professor Thomas H. Huxley :

“ Do not allow yourself to be misled by the common notion that a

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\* It has been said that inquiries made by telegraph companies in England have ascertained that the number of words in ordinary use, in business matters, is only about three thousand. Many speakers and even writers employ even fewer words than that, while Milton used not more than six thousand. The number of different words in the English Bible is about nine thousand. Shakspeare used more than twenty thousand.

hypothesis is untrustworthy because it is a hypothesis. It is often urged, in respect to some scientific conclusion, that, after all, it is only a hypothesis. But what more have we to guide us in nine-tenths of the most important affairs of daily life than hypotheses, and often very ill-based ones? So that in science, where the evidence of a hypothesis is subjected to the most rigid examination, we may rightly pursue the same course. You may have hypotheses and hypotheses. A man may say, if he likes, that the moon is made of green cheese; that is a hypothesis. But another man, who has devoted a great deal of time and attention to the subject, and availed himself of the most powerful telescopes and the results of the observations of others, declares that in his opinion it is probably composed of materials very similar to those of which our earth is made up: and that also is a hypothesis."

(2.) *Redundancy*.—This is the exact opposite of Paucity; and consists in using more words than are necessary to express the thought. It is the most common fault of poor writings and inferior speeches. Vigorous and able writers not seldom fall into this error.

It sometimes arises from a want of thought, leading the author to repeat over and over again the little modicum of sense or feeling which he is able to command. It then leads to *tautology*.

Sometimes it arises from a parrot-like facility in remembering words from their sound, without much attention to their meaning. In such a case the productions soon weary men of good sense.

Sometimes it arises from an ease in expressing the same general thought in two or more different ways, equally correct, and all impressive. In such a case redundancy is not always a blemish in speaking, nor in writings that are designed to be read but once, and rather carelessly, like daily newspapers; but in books

designed to be preserved and studied, all redundancies should be omitted.

We append some examples.

• "I felt truly sorry for this young man. I will not assert that he showed *any* extraordinary *amount* of quickness or depth of intellect, but he has *an adequate amount* of talent, and so much *real* sensibility *and feeling*, that he could not fail to gain friends in any country *in the world*. *I pity him* ; for, amid this *complete* dearth of congenial society, it will be wonderful indeed if he does not become a true Malagasey *at last*."\*

Better thus :

"I felt truly sorry for this young man. I will not assert that he showed extraordinary quickness or depth of intellect ; but he has talent enough, and so much sensibility that he could not fail to gain friends in any country ; but amid this dearth of congenial society, it will be wonderful if he does not become a true Malagasey."

More than thirty per cent. of the words are thus saved, and the force of the expression increased.

"The Egyptians used to use myrrh, spices, and nitre for embalming the dead bodies of the deceased."

It would seem incredible that a man of sense would employ so many useless words as in the above sentence. It should be, "The Egyptians were accustomed to use spices and nitre for embalming dead bodies."

"By a multiplicity *and variety* of words, the thoughts *and sentiments* are not *set off* and accommodated ; but, like David *dressed out* and equipped in Saul's armor, they are encumbered *and oppressed*."

The sentence is greatly strengthened by omitting the italicized words.

A lecturer on art who strove to use a correct style speaks of "interpretations of a passage by the learned

\* Ida Pfeiffer's visit to Madagascar.



Gesner, by Solanus, and Reitzius, which are laughably absurd, *and ridiculous!*"

Would not the following passage from an elegant and instructive writer be improved by striking out the italicized words?

"And is there nothing analogous to this in the social world? Is not the whole frame-work of our present social system founded on the *eternally unchangeable law of the subordination and subserviency* of one human organism to another? In order to be happy, man must be free to develop himself. But *individual freedom must necessarily engender inequality* so long as one human organism has more life-energy than another. We see the results of this principle (*inequality of natural gift*) in a *common school*, where all are placed *in the same circumstances and on an equal footing*. What a remarkable difference in the aptness of boys for particular branches of study! With what rapidity *and apparent ease* some get through the tasks allotted them! How *slow and wearisome* the progress made by others! Undoubtedly the diligent *and attentive* student is generally, at the end of the term, the most advanced in his class. But even in a *well-regulated school*, where industrious habits are carefully cultivated, where the strictest discipline is rigidly enforced, *and where all are not only expected but actually made to study*, there is the same variety in the natural capacities of the scholars, the same striking diversity in their *intellectual progress*. When reference is made to the standing of each at the commencement and *then at the close of the session*, some boys have got far ahead of the others in the same branch, notwithstanding those who have had the misfortune to fall back *in their class* have not unfrequently received the greatest share of the time *and attention* of their teacher. Thus, notwithstanding the oft-cited saying of Euclid, 'There is no royal road to learning,' it is undeniable that there is such a thing as an innate *or natural intellectual and moral* superiority of capacity possessed by one man over another."\*

32. *Discrimination on the proper Number of Words needed.*—It is possible that some persons may not consider the above extract improved by annulling the italicized words, but it should be observed that concise productions, if perspicuous, please cultivated minds,

\* What may be Learned from a Tree. By Harland Coultas, p. 71.

and control the attention better than diffuse ones. The importance of this subject requires discriminating study. In some instances diffuseness, and what might be called tautology, is necessary, as when a subject is difficult to be understood by the persons addressed, or when it is disagreeable, and must be circuitously and slowly approached. A word of many syllables, slowly uttered, may sometimes be more efficient than a short, sharp expression. "He was tremendously alarmed," is more impressive than a shorter expression would be. When the author wishes a subject to be thought of more than it will be with one, even the very best expression, he may use more words than are strictly necessary. Every one should be able at pleasure to use a clear, sharp, laconic style.

## CHAPTER IX.

## FURTHER DIRECTIONS UPON THE CHOICE OF WORDS.

33. *Purity of Words.*—THE English language is largely made up of words that have been introduced from other languages, and this process may yet continue; still it violates good taste to use foreign terms needlessly and excessively. This practice savors of pedantry. It affects to display learning, but often betrays vanity. It frequently indicates deficiency rather than proficiency in scholarship. Ripe scholars can afford to confine themselves to one language at a time, and use foreign expressions in their composition only when they wish to express a shade of thought that can not be conveyed in the idiom of the English language, or when they wish to avail themselves of associations connected with some foreign expression, or when they wish to make a direct quotation from a production in another language.

Let a young writer remember that the profuse use of hackneyed foreign terms, usually found in a list at the close of our spelling-books and dictionaries, such as *prima facie*, *beau ideal*, *legio tonans*, *bona fide*, is not so much an indication of scholarship as either of carelessness or pedantry. When such a phrase is em-

ployed by a truly learned writer, there is an aptness or reason for its use, that can not well be comprehended except by a person familiar with the language from which it is taken. A show of erudition, with which to astonish the vulgar, may be obtained from an encyclopædia in half an hour, but it will never deceive the learned.

34. *The Use of foreign Words sometimes proper.*—At the same time it must be allowed that foreign words may sometimes be used with good effect. When those addressed may be presumed to understand them, when they are clothed with familiar associations, when they serve as a cloak for ideas that would be less agreeable in a native dress, or when they express what a native word can not, they may properly be employed.

Thus Walter Scott, speaking of Americans, says: "They are advancing in the lists of our literature, and they will not be long deficient in the *petite morale*, especially as they have, like ourselves, the rage for travelling." The word politeness might be substituted for the French words in the above, but would not be so specific; "the amenities of social intercourse" would have been too long, and neither would have suggested the thought, that a noted French writer has termed social manners "the minor morals."

Prescott, referring to a defense of the anachronisms and poems of Shakspeare by an over-ardent German admirer, adds: "The old bard, could he raise his head from the tomb, where none might disturb his

bones,\* would exclaim, we imagine, "*Non tali auxilio.*"†

It is not best to accompany foreign words with a translation, unless they are cited as authorities or proofs given in the original to secure accuracy, but translated for the information of all.

35. *Advice of Bryant.*—William Cullen Bryant, an elegant American writer, whose prose writings are not inferior in style to his justly-celebrated poetry, when requested to give his opinion on an article handed to him by a young man, to be printed in his newspaper, said: "My young friend, I observe that you have used several French expressions in your article. I think that, if you will study the English language, you will find it capable of expressing all the ideas that you may have. I have always found it so; and in all that I have written I do not recall an instance in which I was inclined to use a foreign word, but that, on searching, I found a better one in my own language."

Foreign words are seldom needed except for ornament. A well-cultivated taste is necessary to direct in their use, or they will offend more than they please.

36. *New Words should not be recklessly Introduced.*—It was remarked by Dr. Noah Webster, the lexicographer, that he had never ventured to coin but one

\* In these words is an allusion to the epitaph over Shakspeare's grave.

† A quotation from Virgil (*Æneid*, liber ii. vs. 521, 522):

"Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis  
Tempus eget."

(The occasion does not need such help, nor such defenders.)

word—*demoralize*; and it is an indication of his sound judgment, both that he attempted the enterprise only once, and that he then succeeded so well. The most that have striven to manufacture words have failed to make them current. It is not an easy matter to induce a people to substitute new standards of measure or of money for the old. Still, new objects, new classifications, and new actions, render new words necessary. Usage itself must have a beginning, and this should not be left wholly to the ignorant. We have as good a right to new words, or to old words with new meanings, as we have to new thoughts.

37. *When Allowable*.—New terms must be introduced by writers on science and art so often as any new object or law is discovered. They should be introduced naturally and from necessity, not capriciously and presumptuously. Venders of quack medicines, and other pretenders to science, are continually attempting to introduce new words to describe their nostrums or notions, such as *sozodont*, *abracadabra*, and thousands of others, not one of which has passed into reputable usage. The startling effect produced by a new word is generally soon lost, and followed by disapprobation, as a person arraying himself in uncouth garments may attract attention for a moment, but will not be admitted into good society.

38. *Obsolete and Obsolescent Words should generally be avoided*.—The fact that they are obsolete, or indeed obsolescent, indicates either that they are useless, or that for some reason they have been displaced by others. Attempts to revive the use of a forgotten

word are usually failures. "Thou shalt destroy them that speak *leasing*" is not understood by the people, *lying* being now substituted for *leasing*. "Wot" for *knew*, "took up our carriages" for *took up our luggage*, and some other expressions, are instances of terms in the common translation of the Bible that are now obsolete. They can not easily be revived.

In personating a character who is supposed to have lived in a preceding age, it would be proper to represent him as speaking the language common in his time, or at least to use many characteristic terms, to aid in the illusion. Thus Thomson, in his "Castle of Indolence," imitating the style of Spenser, introduced many obsolete terms.

The attempt by some modern poets to revive the use of forgotten words will be nugatory. As "revolutions seldom work backward," so the tide that bears a word toward oblivion seldom has an ebb.

39. *Words should be used in their Modern Meaning.*—Words that have changed their signification should be used in their modern meaning. *Prevent* once signified go before; now it has a meaning that no other word exactly expresses. *Let* is no longer needed in the sense of *hinder*, as it was once employed.

40. *Degeneracy of Words.*—Many words have degenerated in value, and it is impossible to restore them to their former honor. Thus *by-and-by* once meant *immediately*: "Which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him *by-and-by*, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?" (Luke xvii. 7).

*Presently* also once had the same meaning. Thus Shakspeare writes: "My lord, the queen would speak with you and *presently*"—meaning now; and the reply is, "Then will I come to my mother *by-and-by*" (Hamlet, act iii. scene 2).

Though words do thus change their usage, in some instances degenerating in value, and in others rising in importance, good scholarship is often exhibited by restricting a word, as far as possible, to its ancient meaning. By this mark a speaker skilled in the ancient languages may often be distinguished from one ignorant of them.

Words have a history, and some of them a rich history. Jovial was once "suitable to Jove," it is now degraded to *merry*; saturnine was once mysterious and profound, now it is *gloomy*; "animal spirits," "humorous," and "vapors" suggest a theory of physiology long since discarded, but words often survive the theories that invented them.



## CHAPTER X.

FURTHER DIRECTIONS UPON THE CHOICE OF  
WORDS—*Continued.*

41. *Provincialisms.* — PROVINCIALISMS should be avoided, or sparingly and discriminately employed. Some words are used in confined localities, and are unknown elsewhere. If they are substituted for other well-known words in the language, they should be discarded. If they express objects or customs peculiar to that locality, they should be tolerated and rendered respectable. There is no particular reason why a *waistcoat* in England should be called a *vest* in America, or why *trousers*, *railway*, *autumn* there, should be styled here respectively *pantaloons* or *pants*, *railroad*, *fall* :\* and yet so numerous is the population in America that her peculiarities of speech promise to become permanent and the rule, while in some instances the older and perhaps purer English will become obsolete, even in England. The word *clever* in England signifies intelligent, intellectual, and able to succeed ; in the United States it is often used to mean generous, amiable.

42. *Americanisms.*—It is often assumed that Amer-

\* Used occasionally in Scotland (see Beattie's *Life of Thomas Campbell*, vol. i. p. 200).

icans use many provincialisms, which have been called "Americanisms," though, in fact, no people use so few. Many of the inaccuracies that have been styled Americanisms have been imported, but have here obtained larger currency than at home, and are here oftener seen in print. There are of course some peculiar expressions, and always must be, of native origin. The constant tendency in language to change, is introducing new forms of expression, all of which are provincialisms at first. From the multitude of newspapers in this country, and the ease with which almost any one may "see himself in print," colloquialisms and slang terms which finished scholars would never repeat, are frequently printed. All such corruptions of language should be discountenanced. Thus *calculate* is sometimes used for *intend*, *reckon* and *presume* are substituted for *think* by persons who seldom *think* closely, or they would use words more accurately.

43. *Vulgarisms*.—Vulgarisms are words and phrases which, from their origin or general use, have a tendency to excite low and mean associations. "You can see with half an eye," "Go it blind," are instances. Similar to these are hackneyed words or phrases, sometimes called catch-words, which arise in particular places where a company of persons pursuing the same course are associated together, such as army-phrases, college-words, sailors' expressions, all of which should be sedulously excluded from dignified addresses or writings.

44. *Words used erroneously for Others similar in*

*Sound.*—Careless speakers and even writers sometimes mistake a word for another similar to it in sound; but more or less widely different in meaning. Ludicrous errors are thus made by ignorant persons. Thus it would not surprise us to hear that “the *observation* of Christmas as a holiday is commendable,” while *observance* is evidently meant. *Consciousness* may thus be used for *conscience*, and many errors of this kind are often heard from uneducated or careless speakers.

45. *Ambiguous Expressions.* — Ambiguous words should be avoided. Words capable of having two or more meanings, or so employed as to admit of diverse interpretations, should never be used unless it is the deliberate intention of the author to leave the matter undecided and uncertain.

“Solomon, the son of David, who built the Temple, was the best King of Israel.” It is not stated in this sentence who built the Temple.

“Lysias promised to his father never to abandon his friends.” It is impossible to decide *whose* friends are meant, whether those of Lysias or of his father.

No language more abounds in ambiguities than the English. Indeed it may be doubted whether any ambiguity can be found in any language that may not be translated into English. Certainly it might be imitated and paralleled in our language. For this reason, great care should be taken to avoid it, but even after the utmost care it will sometimes occur.

In all legal documents, such as constitutions, laws, treaties, contracts, wills, bonds, and deeds, ambiguity

should be specially guarded against, for it has often led to heated contests, litigation, and even to war. Legal enactments have been rendered inoperative by a single ambiguous expression; constitutions have been perverted from their original design, and creeds have been made to teach precisely the opposite to what their authors believed. In such papers every other grace of composition ought to be sacrificed to perspicuity, which can be attained only by using the right word in the right place.

The oracles of the heathen priests were generally capable of several interpretations. Thus when Pyrrhus applied to the priestess of Delphi to ascertain whether he should be successful against the Romans, he received the reply: "Aio te, Eacidæ, Romanos vincere, posse" — "I say that you, O thou son of Eacus, the Romans are able to conquer." Whether *he* should conquer, or the *Romans*, was still undecided. His self-love prompted him to adopt the former meaning, and, when overcome, the friends of the priestess claimed her infallibility, as indicated by the latter meaning.

"Lovest thou me more than these?"—the question of Jesus to Peter—is, in our translation of the Bible, ambiguous, as it may mean, "Lovest thou me more than thou lovest these?" or "Lovest thou me more than these do?" The last meaning is evidently the one intended.

In speaking, ambiguity may often be prevented by emphasis, and, in writing, by a judicious punctuation. In scientific papers, it is indispensable that the right words should be employed. No reader wishes to

waste his time in studying productions which may be construed into several uncertain meanings.

46. *Intentional Ambiguity*.—Ambiguity may be intentional; and if it can be morally justified, it furnishes ample scope for ingenuity. Talleyrand, a famous French *diplomat*, is often credited with the proverb, "Language is intended to conceal, not to reveal thought." W. Guthrie, Esq., in the preface to his translation of Quintilian, published 1775, says: "During such a state of the public, the business of rhetoric was to teach men not how to express, but how to conceal their thoughts." As an instance of ambiguity in playful composition, take the remark of the poet, Thomas Campbell, to a friend: "This is very shabby of you, after the sublime and pathetic ode which I addressed to you—a composition *which will remain in the English language until it is forgotten!*" A sufficient number of specimens of intentional ambiguity could easily be gathered from the writings and speeches of diplomatists and politicians.

47. *Words symbolically Employed*.—Those who are accustomed to think closely will observe that words are often employed, even by the ablest of speakers, as algebraists employ signs and symbols, without a conscious and full perception of their meaning, by a sort of manipulation or combination, and are finally thought out in the conclusion.

In a treatise, for instance, on universities, commerce, war, agriculture, or any other subject, it is by no means true that the author every time that he uses the word has a full conception of it; but nevertheless he

uses it correctly, and his conclusions are so far just as they apply to the word in all its proper significations. The genuine scholar, when either speaking or listening to a good composition, might with propriety say to an unskilled audience,

“I see a hand you can not see,  
I hear a voice you can not hear.”

48. *The Morality and Value of exact Expressions.*—  
There is an intimate connection between words and the moral character. It has been wittily said,

“Words lead to things : a scale is more precise ;  
Coarse speech, bad grammar, swearing, drinking, vice.”\*

An eloquent writer forcibly remarks :

“Words are instruments of music ; an ignorant man uses them for jargon ; but when a master touches them they have unexpected life and soul. Some words sound out like drums ; some breathe memories sweet as flutes ; some call like a clarionet ; some shout a charge like trumpets ; some are as sweet as children’s talk ; others rich as a mother’s answering back. The words which have universal power are those that have been keyed and chorded in the great orchestral chamber of the human heart. Some words touch as many notes at a stroke as when an organist strikes ten fingers upon a key-board. There are single words which contain life-histories ; and to hear them spoken is like the ringing of chimes. He who knows how to touch and handle skillfully the home-words of his mother’s tongue need ask nothing of style.”†

On the value of abundant and appropriate words, Dr. J. G. Holland has written the following beautiful verses :

“The robin repeats his two beautiful words,  
The meadow-lark whistles his one refrain ;  
And steadily, over and over again,  
The same song swells from a hundred birds.

\* O. W. Holmes.

† Introduction to Mrs. Browning’s Last Poems. By Theodore Tilton, Esq.

“Bobolink, chickadee, blackbird and jay,  
Thrasher and woodpecker, cuckoo and wren,  
Each sings its word, or its phrase, and then  
It has nothing further to sing or say.

“Into that word, or that sweet little phrase,  
All there may be of its life must crowd;  
And low and liquid, or hoarse and loud,  
It breathes its burden of joy and praise.

“A little child sits in his father’s door,  
Chatting and singing with careless tongue;  
A thousand musical words are sung,  
And he holds unuttered a thousand more.

“Words measure power; and they measure thine;  
Greater art thou in thy childish years  
Than all the birds of a hundred spheres;  
They are brutes only, but thou art divine.

“Words measure destiny. Power to declare  
Infinite ranges of passion and thought  
Holds with the infinite only its lot—  
Is of eternity only the heir.

“Words measure life, and they measure its joy,  
Thou hast more joy in thy childish years  
Than the birds of a hundred tuneful spheres,  
So—sing with the beautiful birds, my boy!”

But notwithstanding the value of words, it should be remembered that it is only intellect and emotion that make them valuable. “Language,” as Professor Goldwin Smith forcibly says, “is not a musical instrument into which, if a fool breathes, it will make melody.”

49. *Summary of Directions.*—The directions to be observed in the use of words may be summed up as follows: Employ words of the English language, rejecting foreign words except as quotations, or when more expressive than native words, accompanying them by a translation if they are liable to be not understood;

avoid obsolete words, new terms, and a profusion of technical terms, except when treating upon the subjects to which they especially apply, and then use them accurately; avoid vulgarisms, catch-words, provincialisms, unless the nature of your composition justifies them; use no words unnecessarily, especially in different shades of meaning; study to obtain as extensive a vocabulary as your thoughts require, and always to use the best words in their proper places.

Let no one suppose that too much attention has been given to this subject. Words are the vehicle of thoughts. They indicate both the intellectual and the moral character. The surest proof of scholarship, of discipline, of strong thought, is the right use of words.

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**PART II.**

**FIGURES OF SPEECH AND THOUGHT.**

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We are still considering the material which is employed to convey thought and feeling. It will be ascertained that the first and true meaning of words by no means exhausts this power when in actual use. Figures of speech embrace a valuable part of Rhetoric, and will amply repay careful analysis and methodical examination.

## CHAPTER I.

## TROPES.

1. *Literal and Figurative Meaning.*—THE meaning first given to a word is called its literal meaning. Thus the literal meaning of *head* is that part of the body containing the brain. The literal meaning of *body* is the whole physical structure of an animal.

A meaning different from the first, and yet suggested by the first on account of a similarity, is called a *figurative* meaning. Thus the word *head* may mean a commanding man in a company; it may mean the first object in a collection, as the first in a column of figures, or the starting-place of a fountain or stream. The *head* of this chapter is "Tropes." *Body* may mean an army, a convention, a parliament, the principal part of a discourse or of a structure. *Soul* may mean the purpose or the idea, as the *soul* of this enterprise is personal ambition.

2. *The Foundation of Tropes.*—The figurative use of words is always founded upon a *similarity* between the two objects, or the two thoughts, which the same word is employed to express, so that a person who understands the literal meaning of the word will also readily perceive the figurative meaning, though he never heard it employed in that sense before. Thus

in the expression, "The President is the *head* of the Government," any one who knows the meaning of words will see the sense to be, "The President sustains a relation to the other men in the Government like the relation of a head to the other parts of the body—more conspicuous and commanding."

3. *Definition*.—Tropes are single words, used figuratively or not, in their literal meaning.

The word *trope* is from a Greek word which signifies *turning*, and indicates that the word, called a trope, is turned around out of its first position or meaning.

Tropes are divided into two classes—Synecdoches and Metonymies.

4. *Synecdoches*.—A Synecdoche is a trope in which a word is used to express a thing that differs from its original meaning only *in degree*, and not *in kind*.

"Give us our daily *bread*." *Bread* here means *food*; but bread originally has a part of the meaning of food—certain kinds of food being called bread. "He bartered his soul for *gold*"—gold here standing for *wealth*, of which literally it is only a *part*.

5. *Metonymies*.—A Metonymy is a trope in which a word is used to express a thing differing from its original meaning *in kind*.

"*Addison* was smooth, but *Prescott* smoother." Here *Addison* means *the writings of Addison*; *smooth* means *pleasing to the ear*. Both words are *metonymies*. "Always respect *old age*"—a metonymy for *aged people*. "When speaking in a deliberative assembly, always address *the chair*"—a metonymy for the man  
a president, occupies the principal seat, as the

president's chair. Metonymies are, it will be seen, a little bolder than Synecdoches.

6. *Frequency of Tropes*.—Tropes are of frequent occurrence in all writings.

Sometimes the names of animals are used for men, as "Go tell that *fox*!" How much more expressive than "Go tell that *crafty man*!"

One inanimate thing is made to stand for another. "We are surrounded by a *cloud* of witnesses"—that is, they are so numerous as to suggest a cloud which shuts out the light of the sun. "The city was overwhelmed in a *deluge* of fire."

7. *Tropes must be Employed*.—Tropes are absolutely indispensable as a part of the material of every author. If words were confined to their first meaning, they would be far too few to express the thoughts of men. If every idea had a word, no mortal memory could command sufficient material to express the thoughts of a cultivated mind. Words, like coins of money, must be made to represent successively different objects, for our convenience.

If we examine almost any written production, we shall find many tropes which can not be removed without leaving what remains a useless heap of ruins. Let us analyze, for illustration, the opening sentences of the Preface to Bancroft's "History of the United States:"

"I have *formed* the *design* of writing a History of the United States from the *discovery* of the American Continent to the present time. As the moment *arrives* for publishing a portion of the work, I am *impressed* more strongly than ever with a sense of the grandeur and vastness of the *subject*; and am ready to charge myself with presumption for venturing on so bold an enterprise."

All the words italicized in the above extract (and indeed several others) are tropes. *Form* meant originally to shape, as with a knife or other instrument. The shoemaker forms a shoe. *Design* meant originally a plan or map; *discovery* was the process of *uncovering*, as potatoes are uncovered to be taken from the ground; *impressed* originally meant pressed upon, as the ground is pressed upon by a falling stone; *subject* is something *placed beneath*, as a mat to stand upon; *presumption* is the act of taking too soon, as plucking fruit before it is ripe, or taking an object before our turn, or the time allotted to us; an *enterprise* is something undertaken, has no life, and can not be *bold*.

If we find so many *tropes* in a few lines of unimpassioned prose, what may we expect in poetry?

“So live, that when thy *summons* comes to join  
 The innumerable *caravan* that moves  
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
 His *chamber* in the *silent halls* of death;  
 Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,  
 Scourged to his dungeon, but *sustained* and *soothed*  
 By an *unfaltering* trust, approach thy grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
 Around him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Let each of the italic words in the above be carefully examined, and the literal and figurative meanings be compared.

8. *Terms to express Mental Qualities and Actions all Tropes*.—Indeed it becomes evident, by careful examination, that nearly if not quite all the language employed to describe the mind and mental action is

figurative. The stock of words first used by man was small, and described only *material* objects and changes and phenomena. As men gradually advanced to consider and explain mental objects and actions, instead of inventing new words to express them, they used old terms in a new sense. They were enabled to do this by the fact that there is a mysterious analogy between matter and mind, and between material and mental operations; an analogy admirable, and that can not be accidental, which shows that God has made material and spiritual things to exist together and illustrate each other. Neither can be properly understood without studying the other. Language links them together. Physics must always precede metaphysics. Rhetoric embraces the presentation of both.

9. *The original Meaning of many Tropes lost.*—Nearly if not quite all of the terms now used to express mental properties and actions were originally confined to material objects and operations. But inasmuch as the English language is a modern language, and is made up largely of words *transferred* from other languages, the most of the words used to describe mental facts and actions *have never been used in their literal meaning in the English language*. The first meaning of the words learned by those who speak only the English language is that which they now bear, though they were once employed in other languages in a lower sense.

We give a few specimens of this kind of words. *Reflect*, literally, to throw back, as a mirror reflects



the rays of light ; figuratively, to look at a subject on both sides, or to consider or meditate. *Educate*, literally, to lead out ; figuratively, to instruct and train. *Digest*, literally, to bear away or dissolve, as water dissolves sugar ; figuratively, to reflect upon and study, as to digest a book. Other words of this character are, *associate*, *compare*, *intellect*, *sincere*, *consult*, *remark*, *conclude*, and hundreds more. Many tropes have become so common that the secondary sense has actually superseded, and in some cases wholly supplanted, the primary signification. Ralph Waldo Emerson has well said, "As the limestone of the continent consists of infinite masses of the shells of animalcules, so language is made up of images, or tropes, which now, in their secondary use, have long since ceased to remind us of their poetic origin."

10. *New Tropes*.—As the realm of nature is more widely and accurately explored, and as inventions are multiplied, new tropes are introduced. The material for the expression of mental action is increased. Such words as *outcropping*, *strata*, *daguerreotype*, in their *tropical* or figurative sense, are of course more recent than they are in their scientific sense.

11. *Advantages of Tropes*.—The advantages of tropes are great.

(1.) They enable us to express many thoughts by a few words. Our best words have several significations—a literal sense and two or more figurative senses. A new tropical sense of an old word is equivalent to the addition of a word to our language, while if the tropical sense is naturally suggested by the primitive

sense, the memory is not burdened, and the imagination is pleased. We can not afford a new word for every thought.

(2.) Tropes give new power and beauty to language.

A sentiment *tropically* expressed is much more forcible, and often much more beautiful, than literally expressed.

"The moon *climbs up* the sky."

"Within this *wall* of flesh  
There is a soul."

"Which *angry* tides cast up on desert shore."

"This is a *drowsy* night."

"Let him keep the *keen, deep*, and precious hatred, set on fire of hell, alive if he can."

12. *Classification of Tropes*.—Tropes have been carefully classified by grammarians, though no great practical benefit in speaking arises from a memory of the classification.

SYNECDOCHES may be divided into four classes:

(1.) *Using the Species for the Genus*.—"Give us our daily *bread*." Bread, the lower or narrower class, is used for the higher and broader class, *food*. "He beareth not the *sword* in vain." Here sword is used for all the *means* a magistrate has to execute justice.

It produces a sharper impression to use limited, definite words, rather than broader, and consequently flatter expressions. Orators spontaneously employ this kind of trope frequently.

(2.) *Autonomasia* (a trope of the same kind), *using the Name of an Individual for the Class to which he belongs.*—"He is the second Washington;" "A Daniel, a second Daniel, come to judgment." How much more forcible than "A wise interpreter of law come to judgment!" Thus a traitor may be called a *Catiline* or a *Benedict Arnold*. A mere stickler for polite forms is, in the following sentence from Lord Brougham, called a *Chesterfield*:

"Should you feel much soothed by hearing that some opposition *Chesterfield* had taken alarm at the want of politeness among his brethren, and altered the words, retaining their offensive sense?"

When a sharp impression is to be made, use the most definite terms possible. Instead of war or contention, use battle or fight; instead of passion, use anger, fear, covetousness—as the case may be. This principle is involved in such tropes as the following: "All *hands* take hold," instead of "All *men* take hold;" "Least among *the hundreds* of Judah," instead of "The small villages of Judah;" "A fleet of fifty *sail*," instead of "fifty ships;" "The debt was paid in *green-backs*," instead of "in paper-money, consisting of notes with green backs." The Divine One is, on this principle, designated by one of his attributes, "the Almighty," "the All-seeing," "the Judge." Man may be called "the erect animal," "the governor of the world;" the lion, "the king of beasts;" the ocean, "the great deep." That which inspires passion may be called by the name of the passion, as, "my *love*," "my *defense*."

(3.) *Using the Genus for the Species.*—Of course,

when the object is to soften an impression, a precisely opposite figure may be employed: naming a broader class, or genus, for the narrower class, or species.

Instead of saying that a man was *executed*, we may say that he "lost his life," or "expiated his crime on the gallows." Instead of death, we may use the word sleep. "He rewarded his officers with honors," instead of "He made his generals princes and kings." This is often called Euphemism.

(4.) *Using the Concrete for the Abstract*.—As in the following instance: "When the magistrate was compelled to pronounce condemnation upon his own son, *the father* was subordinated to *the judge*, and the culprit found no mercy." Here "the father" is put for parental affection, and "the judge" for the duty of a judge.

The philosophy of this figure is, that definite expressions are more forcible than indefinite. It is more impressive to say, "Three-fourths or nine-tenths of the people demand this change," than to say, "A large majority desire it." Even in instances where enumeration is impossible similar terms are employed for the sake of a vivid impression. "Ninety-nine hundredths of the prosperity of this people is due to their religion."

METONYMIES also may be classified as follows:

(1.) *The Sign for the Thing signified*.—*Sword*, for war; the *White House*, for the office of President of the United States; the *epaulets*, for military office; *red tape*, for the difficulties in obtaining the completion of a work that must pass the inspection of sever-

al officers; a *pen*, for literature. "The pen is mightier than the sword."

(2.) *The Container for the Thing contained.*—"The country is jealous of the city." "The army yielded, but the navy resisted." "The mountains may fail, but the prairies will pour out their wealth."

(3.) *A Cause may be put for an Effect, and an Effect for a Cause.*—"The savage desolation of war." The cause of the desolation is a savage spirit: here it is transferred to the effect.

In an opposite transference, we may speak of *pale* death, *joyful* health, a *proud* testimony. This is sometimes called the *transferred epithet*.

(4.) *A Man may be named for his Works.*—Thus we speak of "Shakspeare," meaning his writings, "Blackstone," meaning his work on law. This is akin to personification, to be described hereafter.

Notice the tropes italicized in the following sentences:

"Ye *grand* inventions of ancient bards! ye *gay* creations of modern fancy! ye bright visions! ye *fervid* and impassioned thoughts! serve ye all for no better purpose than the pastime of a single hour? Ah! not so; not so. It is yours to *stir* to the *bottom* the *dull* and *stagnant* soul. Ye can *carry* man *out of himself*; and make him feel his kindred with his whole race. Ye can teach him to look beyond external nature for enjoyment. Ye *rouse* him from the *deep lethargy* of sense, *raise* him above the worthless thing we are, and reveal to him his capacity for purer purposes, and a nobler state of being."

Comparisons and Metaphors are nearly akin to Tropes, and, after their examination, further directions upon the use of them all will be given.

## CHAPTER II.

## COMPARISONS.

13. *The Foundation of Comparisons.*—THE first result of careful thought is the classification of objects according to their common nature, and learning the meaning of those words called *common nouns*. The child arrives at this knowledge gradually, and for a time is inclined to call all men "father," and if he happens to have become acquainted first with a horse, to call all quadrupeds "horse." As knowledge increases, classification becomes more minute. Thus *man* is divided into Caucasian, Malayan, African.

By an exercise of the same kind, the mind takes notice of the *differences* of individuals that can not be classified together, and of the *similarities* of individuals in some respects, that are yet so different in other respects that they can not be classified together. When the attention is called to two objects that are both alike in some particular, and unlike in others, and the likeness is pointed out, a comparison is made.

14. *Definition.*—Comparison is the likening of one object to another, from which it also differs in so many other qualities to which the attention is not directed, that it can not properly be said to belong to the same class.

15. *Comparisons used to convey Information.*—The first object of comparisons is to convey information. Thus: "Aluminum is a metal with a lustre like that of silver and platinum." This describes the appearance of aluminum to one who knows the appearance of silver and platinum. "The soldiers stood like statues, unmoved by the cannons' roar." This simply describes the steady, unmoved position of the soldiers. Nearly all speakers whose object is to impart information make frequent use of comparisons.

This figure of speech, as it is sometimes called, though in reality it is not a figure, but a simple statement of a similarity, is the most common of all modes of illustration, and every writer and speaker should study its nature and power. We give a few specimens of illustrative comparisons, to show the beauty and impressiveness of this kind of illustration.

How sublime the thought in Derzhavin's address to the Deity:

"Yes, in my spirit doth thy Spirit shine,  
As shines the sunbeam in a drop of dew."

It will be observed that comparisons are often made without the use of such terms as *like*, *so*, *as*, or any other terms to call attention to them as comparisons. It is easy, however, to see that a comparison of two or more objects is made.

"Before the curing of a strong disease,  
Even in the instance of repair and health,  
The fit is strongest; \* \* \* Evils that take leave,  
On their departure most of all show evil."

"As seeds lie dormant in the earth for hundreds of years, and then when brought to the influence of air and light, exhibit their vitality,

so the germ of the soul may lie concealed and undeveloped during the whole term of human life."

"The secret which the murderer possesses soon comes to possess him ; and like the evil spirits of which we read, it overcomes him, and leads him whithersoever it will."

Sometimes it is necessary to explain to some extent the nature of the object with which the comparison is made. The following from Rev. Dr. Caird is impressive, but expressed in too many words :

"Just as in winter the cold may become so intense as to freeze the thermometer, and thereby to leave you without the means of marking the subsequent increases of cold, so there is a point in the lowered temperature of the inward consciousness where the growing coldness, hardness, selfishness of a man's nature can no longer be noted—the mechanism by which moral variations are indicated becoming itself insensible and motionless."

The following from Macaulay, in a plea for thorough study, is a comparison which required to be preceded by an explanation, the interest of which justifies its length :

"Rumford, it is said, proposed to the Elector of Bavaria a scheme for feeding his soldiers at a much cheaper rate than formerly. His plan was simply to compel them to masticate their food thoroughly. A small quantity thus eaten would, according to that famous projector, afford more sustenance than a large meal hastily devoured. I do not know how Rumford's proposition was received ; but to the mind, I believe, it will be found more nutritious to digest a page than to devour a volume."

Comparisons between objects entirely different in their nature often please the mind and aid the memory, as in the instance : "There is something grateful in any positive opinion, though in many points wrong, as even weeds are useful that grow on a bank of sand."

16. *Elevating Comparisons, and the Opposite.*—Com-



parisons are also used to elevate our estimation of an object, or to degrade it.

Byron, describing Henry Kirke White as losing his life by excessive study, uses a comparison that gives an exalted conception of his character :

“Oh, what a noble heart was here undone,  
When Science' self destroyed her favorite son!  
’Twas thine own genius gave the final blow,  
And helped to plant the wound that laid thee low.  
So the struck eagle, stretched upon the plain,  
No more through rolling clouds to soar again,  
Viewed his own feather on the fatal dart,  
Which winged the shaft that quivered in his heart :  
Keen were his pangs, but keener far to feel,  
He nursed the pinion which impelled the steel ;  
While the same plumage that had warmed his nest  
Drunk the last life-drop of his bleeding breast.”

Comparisons used to degrade are a very efficient weapon with which to attack error and folly.

“X—— would be a powerful preacher if he did not drown his thought in a Dead Sea of words. You don't want a drove of oxen to drag a cart-load of potatoes on a smooth road.”

“Skepticism in an honest and thoughtful young man is like the chicken-pox—very apt to come, but not dangerous, and soon over, leaving both complexion and constitution as good as ever.”

“To consort with such company is like playing with pitch; defilement is sure to follow.”

Pope, wishing to undervalue man's power to understand God or his works, wrote :

“Superior beings, when of late they saw  
A mortal man unfold all nature's law,  
Admired such wisdom in an earthly shape,  
And showed a Newton as we show an ape.”

17. *Comparisons Designed simply to Interest.*—Comparisons are used simply to interest and please.

They enliven sober composition, and render impressive and pleasing truth that is already understood, and which will not be denied. Sir William Jones said: "Ignorance is to the mind what extreme darkness is to the nerves: both cause an uneasy sensation; and we naturally love knowledge as we love light, even when we have no design of applying either to a purpose essentially useful."

Prescott says: "The ocean, stretched between us and the Old World, has the effect of time, and extinguishes, or at least cools, hot and angry feelings."

Such comparisons interest, though they may not instruct.

The relations of Comparison to Wit and to Antithesis will be shown under those topics respectively.

18. *Argumentative Comparisons*.—Comparisons are among the most efficient weapons in the armory of the debater. Scarcely ever does one find himself earnestly attempting to prove a proposition, without bringing to his aid illustrations either to produce conviction or to show more impressively his own meaning. Thus Froude, in his "History of England," makes abundant use of this figure. We give a single example from him of a comparison dwelt upon and amplified:

"There are many scenes in human life which, as a great poet teaches us, are either sad or beautiful, cheerless or refreshing, according to the direction from which we approach them. If, on a morning in spring, we behold the ridges of a fresh-turned plowed field from their northern side, our eyes, catching only the shadowed slopes of the successive furrows, see an expanse of white, the unmelted remains of the night's hailstorm or the hoar-frost of the dawn. We make a circuit, or we cross over and look behind us, and on the very

same ground there is nothing to be seen but the rich brown soil swelling in the sunshine, warm with promise, and checkered perhaps here and there with a green blade bursting through the surface. Both images are true to the facts of nature. Both pictures are created by real objects really existing. The pleasant certainty, however, remains with us, that the winter is passing away and summer is coming; the promise of the future is not with the ice and the sleet, but with the sunshine, with gladness and hope."

19. *Practical Directions on the Use of Comparisons.*—It would be easy to gather many faulty comparisons to warn the student against prevalent errors. Let the following directions be observed:

(1.) The objects compared must be alike in some respects and different in many others, and the greater both the likeness and difference are, the more pleasing will the comparison be. Let it be said that "Napoleon, like Cæsar, was a great conqueror, and the mind is not pleased. Napoleon and Cæsar were too nearly alike—both generals, both emperors, both conquerors. But let it be said Florence Nightingale, like Cæsar, was a great conqueror; he conquered nations, she prejudice and apathy; he sacrificed, and she saved the lives of thousands, and the propriety of the comparison is at once seen.

(2.) The objects with which the comparison is made must be well known, and if any explanation is needed, it must not be so long, or so interesting, as to divert the mind from the principal purpose of the author. When the likeness is remote, and requires a great deal of study to be perceived, it is said to be far-fetched, and must be very instructive or pleasing, or it will be condemned.

The following from Jean Paul Richter, like many

others by the same author, are far-fetched, and yet their impressiveness when understood makes them pleasing and allowable:

“Life, like the olive, is a bitter fruit; then grasp both with the press, and they will afford the sweetest oil.

“Does the heaven of our existence, like the blue one over our heads, consist of mere empty air, which, when near to, and in little, is only a transparent nothing, and which only in the distance and in grasp becomes blue ether?”

(3.) Comparisons must be elevating or degrading, according to their purpose, whether it be to honor or debase.

The following from Horace Greeley utters a degree of contempt for the charge which it repels:

“None of them regarded the right of a State to secede from the Union as more defensible than the right of a slave to secede from the cask which it helps to form.”

(4.) Comparisons should not be so frequent as to weary the mind; for, like all other good things, they may by superabundance become deformities.

(5.) Comparisons should not be made simply from habit, where they add neither information nor impressiveness to what has already been said, or may be better said, without them.

Common as this figure of speech is, it is not a little remarkable that many eminent authors have made no use of it whatever. In the celebrated oration of Demosthenes upon the Crown, the only well-marked simile is the following: “Like a winter storm, this whole affair came down upon the city.”

## EXERCISE.

Let the student examine the following comparisons, and decide whether they are correct or faulty, and whether they were probably used to illustrate, embellish, elevate, or degrade.

"I have ventured,  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders,  
This many summers in a sea of glory."

"At five she had to attend her colleague, a hateful old toad-eater, as illiterate as a chamber-maid, as proud as a whole German chapter."

"The project of mending a bad world, by teaching people to give new names to old things, reminds us of Walter Shandy's scheme for compensating the loss of his son's nose by christening him Trismegistus."

"The public mind in our country resembles the sea when the tide is rising. Each successive wave rushes forward, breaks and rolls back; but the great flood is steadily coming on."

"True art has nothing to do with such ephemeral and local affairs as Poor Laws and Poor Law Boards; and whenever art tries to serve such a double purpose, it is like an egg with two yolks—neither is ever hatched."

"Curses, like chickens, always come home to roost."

"She never told her love,  
But let concealment, like a worm in the bud,  
Feed on her damask cheek. She pined in thought,  
And with a green and yellow melancholy,  
She sat, like Patience on a monument,  
Smiling at grief."

"True friendship is like sound health; the value of it is seldom known until it is lost."

"The music of Carryl, like the memory of joys that are past, was pleasant and mournful to the soul."

## CHAPTER III.

## ALLUSIONS.

20. *Definition.*—AN Allusion is an implied Comparison. Any fact, character, object, or choice expression, supposed by a speaker to be well known to his hearers, may be *alluded to*, without being fully described, in such a way as to add force or beauty to the thought which he wishes to express. Thus allusions are illimitable in number and variety in modern literature.

Allusions may vary in perspicuity, from such clear statements of likeness as to be almost like formal comparisons, to such indistinct references as to be noticed only by persons of quick perception who are thoroughly familiar with the subject alluded to.

21. *Scriptural Allusions.*—The most frequently used are Scriptural allusions, or references to some passage, description, or thought in the Bible. A modern writer relates a fancied dream in which the Bible was annihilated; such an annihilation—if it should carry all Scriptural quotations and allusions with it—would make fearful chasms in the books of all modern nations; indeed, except a few works purely scientific, it would scarcely leave a complete book in the Christian world!

Patrick Henry, in his oft-quoted eloquent speech, exclaimed: "Gentlemen may cry Peace, Peace, when

there is no peace!" Was he not thinking of what he had often heard from Jeremiah vi. 14—"They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, *Peace, Peace, when there is no peace?*"

Take another example from the writings of a clergyman :

"Each one is sent to teach us something, and all together they have a lesson which is beyond the power of any to teach alone. But if they come together, we should break down, and learn nothing. *The smoking flax* would be put out."

Reference here is made to an expression of Isaiah —"The smoking flax shall he not quench."

"Misery," says Goethe, "becomes as prosaic and familiar to me as my own hearth, but nevertheless I do not let go my idea, and will wrestle with the unknown angel, even should I halt upon my thigh."

Those who remember the story of Jacob and the angel, as related in the thirty-second chapter of Genesis, perceive the force of this allusion.

The Bible is an inexhaustible fountain, not only of thought but of expressions, which may be employed with a great variety of signification, added to the associations of their original meaning, and of the times and places in which they have been heard. It indicates, however, a poor and depraved taste to use Scriptural allusions in such a way as to clothe Bible language with incongruous associations, or to offend religious feelings.

22. *Classical Allusions*.—What are called classical allusions are common in writers who have, or pretend to have, read carefully the best works in the Greek and

Latin languages. As these have for some centuries been studied by learned men, it is assumed that all scholars are familiar with them, and thus facts and expressions are used as illustrations, or

“To point a moral or adorn a tale.”

“The inundation of lawless power,” said Robert Hall, “after covering the rest of Europe, threatens England; and we are exactly, most critically placed in the only aperture where it can be successfully repelled, in the *Thermopylæ of the universe*.”

Who has not heard of the brave Leonidas and the three hundred Spartans with him, who at the narrow defile of Thermopylæ resisted, till the last one fell, the torrents of Persians who attempted to force a passage through?

“The railway and telegraph,” says Dr. D. D. Whedon, “are breaking up the hostile demarcations which once divided and inflamed mankind—and so wing-footed Mercury is tearing up old *Terminus*.”

Mercury was the message-bearer, or errand-boy, of the gods; Terminus defended “the ancient landmarks which the fathers had set.”

There is a classical allusion in the following good advice given to Gil Blas, by the ingenious author of that work:

“You may meet with people inclined to divert themselves with your credulity, but don’t be duped, nor believe yourself, though they should swear it, *the eighth wonder of the world*.”

This evidently alludes to a favorite notion of the ancients that the world had only seven great wonders, which they enumerated.

23. *Miscellaneous Allusions*.—Good speakers and writers often make allusions to writings which every



well-informed person is presumed to have read, such as "Pilgrim's Progress," "Æsop's Fables," "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments," "Plutarch's Lives," and the leading events of history.

Allusions may be made to customs, to phrases, to science, to almost every known object of thought, and often they are understood by only a few who hear them.

Dr. Bushnell, in a lecture before a learned assembly, said :

"The universities will be filled with a profound spirit of religion, and the *bene orasse* will be a fountain of inspiration."

Who could understand that who did not know that Luther's favorite motto was "*Bene orasse est bene studuisse*;" that is, "To have prayed well is to have studied well?"

Fuller, in describing an elegant writer, says :

"He was excellent at the flat hand of rhetoric, which gives rather pats than blows; but he could not bend his fist to dispute."

This has special force to one reminded of the remark of Cicero, that Zeno compared Rhetoric and Logic respectively to the flat hand and the fist.\*

Some allusions are exceedingly beautiful, because they suggest a new meaning to old expressions. Thus Longfellow, describing a tract of country troubled with insects because the people had killed the birds, says :

"Devoured by worms, like Herod, was the town,  
Because, like Herod, it had ruthlessly  
Slaughtered the Innocents."

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\* Cicero, de Oratore, lib. xxxii.

Few need to be informed that one Herod caused to be slaughtered the babes of Bethlehem, commonly called "The Slaughter of the Innocents;" another Herod died a miserable death, being "devoured by worms;" and all see how beautifully the poet has given a new meaning to those expressions.

"When I think," says Carlyle, "that Music is condemned to be mad, and to burn herself on such a funeral pile, your celestial opera-house grows dark."

Here allusion is made to the old Hindoo custom of suttee, or of the voluntary burning of the widow on the funeral pile of her husband.

How pleasant is the allusion to Dr. Franklin's discovery of the identity of electricity and lightning by Thomas Hood, in a poem on the pleasures of childhood! It seems also that in childhood he "wrote compositions:"

"My kite—how fast and far it flies!  
While I, a sort of Franklin, drew  
My pleasure from the sky!  
'Twas papered o'er with studious themes,  
The tasks I wrote—my present dreams  
Will never soar so high."

So grave a historian as Merivale draws an illustration from pugilism when he represents Rome as "squaring with the world."\*

Webster, in his beautiful description of the Bunker Hill Monument, says:

"Nor does the rising sun cause tones of music to issue from its summit."

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\* Merivale's History of the Romans under the Empire (London, 1862, vol. vii. p. 380).

Who would suppose that the sun would evoke music out of a pile of stone, had he not heard of the famous statue of Memnon in Egypt, of which Herodotus relates that the rays of the morning sun evoked music from the rock?

But we must end these illustrations, for we find their supply

"Thick as the autumnal leaves that strew the brooks  
Of Vallombrosa."

24. *The Innuendo*.—What has been called Innuendo, or Insinuation, falls properly under the head of Allusion. It is however generally confined to obscure allusions to objects or facts that tend to lower our estimation of the person or sentiment which we are describing.

Thus Burke, in his celebrated speech on American taxation, described General Conway as having befriended Americans by a motion in Parliament, but intimated that he was now betraying their cause *for a bribe*.

"All England, all America joined in his applause. 'Hope elevated, and joy brightened his crest.' I stood near him; and his face, to use the expression of the Scripture of the first martyr, 'his face was as it had been the face of an angel.' I do not know how others feel, but if I had stood in that situation, I never would have exchanged it for *all that kings in their profusion could bestow*."

The covert meaning of the last expression is evident.

25. *Pedantic Allusions*.—Some allusions are so learned as to be justly termed pedantic, unless there is good reason to believe that the persons addressed are familiar with the subject.

26. *Practical Directions.* — The following practical directions on this subject should be observed :

(1.) Let the allusion spring up spontaneously from a thought in the mind, and not be laboriously sought by consulting a cyclopædia simply for the occasion.

(2.) Let the allusion be appropriate, and really add force or beauty to the sentiment.

(3.) Let it be suited to the occasion, and be drawn from subjects familiar to the persons addressed, and not degrade nor elevate the sentiment inappropriately.

(4.) If it is obscure, interpose a word of explanation so that it may be understood.

Abundant information, a prerequisite to genuine eloquence, will exhibit itself largely in comparisons and allusions.

## CHAPTER IV.

## METAPHORS.

27. *Definitions and Examples.*—A METAPHOR is an implied comparison. One great source of the power of a metaphor is its condensation.

Every trope may be regarded as a metaphor, but there are metaphors that can not be called tropes. A trope consists of a single expression, a metaphor may consist of many words.

In a metaphor the words—whether used literally or not—actually suggest a conception different from their original signification. In a trope *one word* is used in a figurative sense; in a metaphor the idea expressed *by the whole sentence* is to be understood in a figurative sense.

The sentence "Sin, though sometimes sweet, is always bitter," contains two tropes, *sweet* and *bitter* being used out of their natural sense. But Dr. South, speaking of sin, says: "Sin is bitter-sweet; the fine colors of the serpent by no means make amends for the poison of his sting."

This last sentence, though true literally, is also true figuratively, and it is the figurative sense attached to it that makes it a metaphor. In this sense it means that, just as the fine colors of a serpent will not

make amends for the poison of his sting, so the pleasures of sin will not recompense for its punishment.

28. *Metaphors resolvable into Comparisons.*—Every metaphor may be resolved into a comparison, but the use of a metaphor does not always imply a clear conception of the comparison.

The analogy or likeness between two things or actions may be so striking that the language which *literally* describes the first may also suggest the second, and a man may use the language to describe the second, without having any thought of the first. When one says, "The sun has retired to rest for the night," the hearer may not think that, "as a weary man retires to his bed, so the sun has disappeared in the west," but he would simply think—the sun has set.

"Petrarch relighted the torch of ancient learning." Here is presented the idea of a man lighting a torch that had been extinguished: as it is a "torch of ancient learning," we think of Petrarch as studying, editing, and publishing the writings of the Greek and Roman authors, which had been for some time forgotten, till he brought them once more to public notice.

Generally, when a metaphor is used, the meaning of it is easily perceived without the necessity of resolving it into a formal comparison, and without any consciousness that it implies a comparison.

An illustration of the condensation of a comparison into a metaphor is given by Spence, as follows: "As, in passing through the crystal, beams of white light are decomposed into the colors of the rainbow, so, in traversing the soul of the poet, the colorless rays of

truth are transformed into brightly-tinted poetry." Condensed into a metaphor, it becomes: "The white light of truth, in traversing the many-sided transparent soul of the poet, is refracted into iris-hued poetry."

29. *Examples of Metaphors.*—The following is from the speech of Daniel Webster at the laying of the corner-stone of Bunker Hill Monument, June 17, 1825:

"When the battle of Bunker Hill was fought, the existence of South America was scarcely felt in the civilized world. Borne down by colonial subjugation, monopoly, and bigotry, those regions of the South were hardly visible above the horizon. But in our day there has been, as it were, a new creation. The southern hemisphere emerges from the sea. Its lofty mountains begin to lift themselves into the light of heaven; its broad and fertile plains stretch out in beauty to the eye of civilized man, and at the mighty bidding of the voice of political liberty the waters of darkness retire."

The following is a good metaphor from the writings of the Rev. Dr. Bethune:

"The giant, man, long crushed by usurpers of divine right, is flinging off the Etna from his mangled breast. His limbs are not yet drawn from under the quaking, and groaning, fire-spouting mass."

Rev. Dr. Olin said:

"Into this turbid maelstrom (party strife), from which virtue and conscience never come forth without a stain, good but ambitious men, of facile morality and feeble purposes, are ever ready to plunge."

Rev. Dr. A. P. Stanley, speaking of the Bible, says:

"The Psalter alone, by its manifold applications and uses in after times, is a vast palimpsest,\* written over and over again, illuminated, illustrated, by every conceivable incident and emotion of men and of nations: battles, wanderings, dangers, escapes, death-beds, obsequies, of many ages and countries, rise, or may rise, to our view, as we read it."

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\* A parchment written over the second time, with the first writing not erased.

30. *The Object of Metaphors, and when they should be employed.* — The object of metaphors is to express thought that plain language can not express, and also to express thought and emotion more forcibly and impressively than literal language can express them.

Metaphors should be suited both in frequency and character to the nature of the subject treated. In a strictly didactic or scientific writing, the frequent use of metaphors would be improper and offensive. In such a work as "Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding" no striking metaphors are found, while the tropes employed are usually those which had become so common as not to attract attention as figurative language. Statutes, deeds, wills, and all legal documents, in which precision is of the utmost consequence, should avoid metaphorical language. In the Declaration of Independence, the style of which is eminently suited to its gravity and value, a few common tropes occur, but not a single metaphor. Metaphors in such a paper would betray a want of high culture and of correct taste in its writer.

In narratives they are proper, particularly when any thoughts of more than ordinary consequence are presented, or when excitement or passion is represented.

Historians use them to impart vivacity to style. A striking conception is thus presented by Gibbon :

"Instead of a statue cast in a single mould by the hand of an artist, the works of Justinian represent a tessellated pavement of antique and costly fragments."

The following is a good metaphor from Bancroft's "History of the United States :"



"It was in self-defense that Puritanism in America began those transient persecutions of which the excess shall find in me no apologist; and which yet were no more than a train of mists hovering, of an autumn morning, over the channel of a fine river, that diffused freshness and fertility wherever it wound."

31. *Metaphors in Oratory.*—In oratory, when the object of the speaker is to interest and excite emotion, metaphor is peculiarly appropriate. Here it breathes its native air, and hurries the hearer with it through beautiful landscapes, and amid various treasures. The most celebrated orations in ancient and modern times produced much of their effect by the judicious use of metaphors.\*

Demosthenes, in one of his orations against Philip, exclaimed:

"He is the deadly enemy of the whole city, and *of the very ground it stands on.*"

"City" here is a trope for the inhabitants of the city, and "the very ground it stands on," suggests that his hatred was so intense and unreasonable that he would destroy all the people, irrespective of their individual character.

Brougham, speaking of ancient oratory, describes it beautifully by a metaphor:

"The mighty flood of speech rolls on in a channel ever full, but which never overflows. Whether it rushes in a torrent of allusions, or moves along in a majestic exposition of enlarged principles, descends

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\* This is not so true of ancient as of modern orations on the average, and is not so true of Demosthenes as of Cicero. It has been said that Demosthenes never used figures. This is not strictly true, but it is evident that logic and earnestness, not poetry, were the chief elements of his power.

hoarse and headlong in overwhelming invective, or glides melodious in narrative and description, or spreads itself out shining in illustration, its course is ever onward and entire—never scattered, never stagnant, never sluggish.”

This is an extravagant statement, but a forcible metaphor.

Modern far surpasses ancient oratory in abundance, appropriateness, and richness of metaphor.

How expressive, for instance, was the language of Grattan in pleading for Irish rights!

“I wish for nothing but to breathe in this our island, in common with my fellow-subjects, the air of liberty. I never will be satisfied so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking to his rags. Though great men apostatize, yet the cause will live; and though the public speaker should die, yet the immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, will not die with the prophet, but survive him.”

Notice also one of the expressions of Daniel Webster on Bunker Hill:

“That motionless shaft” [the monument] “will be the most powerful of speakers. Its speech will be of civil and religious liberty. It will speak of patriotism and of courage. It will speak of the moral improvement and elevation of mankind. Decrepit age will lean against its base, and ingenuous youth gather round it, and speak to each other of the glorious events with which it is connected, and exclaim, ‘Thank God, I also am an American!’”

32. *Metaphors multiply the Meanings of Words.*—Metaphors, like tropes, to which they are as closely allied in principle, multiply the meanings of words.

A language, therefore, which embraces but few terms must abound in metaphors, if the speakers attempt to express a great variety of thoughts. Metaphors that arise from poverty of words are not so

much ornaments as an indispensable part of composition, and, by frequent repetition, lose all their figurative power. This is the reason why speakers among uncultivated, uncivilized peoples, make frequent use of metaphors, though they are always found to be absolutely few and often repeated.\* The North American Indians, for instance, have a small number of metaphors, which they frequently employ, because they are ignorant of words that would definitely express their thoughts.

33. *Cautions upon the Use of Metaphors.*—The following cautions on this subject will be found useful to writers:

(1.) The sense should not be sacrificed to the sound in the use of metaphors. This is a common fault of feeble writers, who display often much tinsel and little thought. The following is an example:

“But who dare claim kindred with Ezekiel, the severe, the mystic, the unfathomable, the lonely, whose hot, hurried breath we feel approaching us like the breath of a furnace? Perhaps the eagle may, for his eye was as keen and fierce as hers. Perhaps the lion may, for his voice, too, sounded vast and hollow on the wilderness wind. Perhaps the wild ass may, for his step was, like hers, uncontrollable. The comparison of a comet, often used, generally wasted, is strikingly applicable to Ezekiel. Sharp, distinct, yet nebulous, swift, sword-shaped,

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\* “The metaphor arose as evidently from rusticity of conception, as the pleonasm from the want of words. The first simple ages, uncultivated, and immersed in sense, could express their rude conceptions of abstract ideas, and the reflex operations of the mind, only by material images, which, so applied, became *metaphors*. This, and not the warmth of a florid and improved fancy, as is commonly supposed, was the true original of figurative expression” (Archbishop Warburton’s *Divine Legation of Moses*, book iv. sect. 4).

This fact was stated also by Cicero (*De Oratore*, caput. xxiv.), and is now universally acknowledged.

blood-red, he hangs in the Old Testament sky, rather burning as a portent than shining as a prophet."

A continued succession of metaphors is wearisome. They are a dinner made up wholly of spices. They are pompous ceremonials employed in every-day life. The ablest writers and strongest speakers use them sparingly, and often give us hours of speaking or many pages of writing, without any metaphors but ordinary tropes.

(2.) Metaphors should not generally be dwelt upon long, and run out into comparisons, or too minutely amplified.

Lord Brougham illustrates, by his own fault, the practice of undue amplification, which he condemns as follows :

"In nothing, not even in beauty of collocation and harmony of rhythm, is the vast superiority of the chaste, vigorous, manly style of the Greek orators and writers more conspicuous than in the abstinent use of their prodigious powers of expression. A single phrase—sometimes a word—and the work is done ; the desired impression is made, as it were, with one stroke, there being nothing superfluous interposed to weaken the blow or break its fall. The commanding idea is singled out ; it is made to stand forward ; all auxiliaries are rejected : as the Emperor Napoleon selected one point in the heart of his adversary's strength, and brought all his power to bear upon that, careless of the other points, which he was sure to carry if he won the centre, as sure to have carried in vain if he left the centre unsubdued. Far otherwise do modern writers make their onset. They resemble those campaigners who fit out twenty little expeditions at a time, to be a laughing-stock if they fail, and useless if they succeed ; or if they do attack in the right place, so divide their forces, from the dread of leaving any one point unassailed, that they can make no sensible impressing where alone it avails them to be felt. It seems the principle of such authors never to leave any thing unsaid that can be said on any one topic ; to run down every idea they start ; to let nothing pass ; to leave nothing to the reader, but harass him with anticipating every thing that could possibly strike his mind."

Had the orator omitted superfluous expressions, he would have imitated what he eulogized, and given us the substance of the above in less than one-fourth of the words. The beauty, however, of his own expressions shows that not always his advice, but sometimes his example, should be followed.

Sometimes a metaphor may be dwelt upon and amplified with good effect so as to resemble an allegory, from which it differs then only in the fact that the interest is confined to the metaphorical idea. The following is a good illustration from the pen of Professor Peter Bayne:

“Born into the world in ignorance, man is impelled by an imperious instinct to know. ‘Seek,’ whispers a voice in his soul, ‘and thou shalt find?’ He seeks, he observes, he inquires. He ascends the mountain of knowledge—rugged, precipitous; he climbs with difficulty from crag to crag; on the topmost peak, in the clear evening of an intellectual life, he beholds, not the sterile boundaries of a universe explored, but an ocean of knowledge yet to be traversed—a Pacific of truth stretching on and on into the deeps of eternity. The fascination of that placid splendor is as great upon him as when he first aspired to know. He yearns to begin a new voyage. He looks into the eyes of his fellows with a ‘dumb surmise’ of endless progress, and limitless attainment, and hope sublime. The promise-whisper of his infancy has not deceived him; he has upon earth made some onward steps, and tasted of the ecstasy of knowledge; his eyes have been opened, and life has taught him that there is an infinite to be known. And now that transporting whisper is once more at his ear, ‘What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter.’ Mind, the angel of the universe, ready to soar out of the mists of the earth, prunes her wings for everlasting flight. The instinct which forbids her to close her pinions and to die has been veracious for time, and it is justly trusted for eternity.”

Such well-sustained metaphors are often exceedingly beautiful and impressive, and it would be indeed hypercritical to condemn them.

(3.) Incongruous metaphors should not be employed, except when strong passion will justify them.

It has been maintained that no metaphor should be used that is not capable of being presented in a picture. This is too rigid. Shakspeare, in one of his most celebrated passages, has the following:

“Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them?”

The “taking arms against a sea” has been condemned by some who were too cool and hypercritical to see the real beauty and force of the expression. Hamlet was represented as alone when he uttered the words, with none to criticise, and so excited as to be querying with himself whether he had not better commit suicide. His brain was on fire. Thoughts chased each other through his mind so fast that he was not able to finish one before he attempted to express another. He thought of “taking arms” against troubles that seemed in multitude and power like “a sea,” and of using those arms, not against the troubles, but against himself, and thus, by ending his own life, to end them. All these thoughts and more forced themselves tumultuously into a single utterance. Could a more nervous expression be devised than that of the great poet? Those who condemn it expose feebleness in themselves, not in Shakspeare.

Shakspeare abounds in such “mixed metaphors” when the circumstances justified them. He had no occasion to resort to metaphors from a paucity of

terms, for he used more than twenty thousand words—more perhaps than any other writer in the English language before or since. And yet his writings abound in metaphors.

Generally, incongruous metaphors should be avoided. "The corner-stone of this edifice will soon fall prostrate to the earth," is very absurd.

Many ludicrous mixed metaphors are thrown off by imaginative speakers which are offensive to good taste, unless the object is to amuse by their extravagance. The following are specimens:

"The apple of discord is now fairly in our midst, and if not nipped in the bud it will burst forth into a conflagration which will deluge the sea of politics with an earthquake of heresies."

"This man, gentlemen of the jury, walks into court like a motionless statue, with the cloak of hypocrisy in his mouth, and is attempting to screw three large oaks out of my clients' pockets."

"Boyle was the father of chemistry, and brother to the Earl of Cork."

At the same time, on this subject as on others, it is possible to use the pruning-knife too severely.

Many eminent writers have been entirely destitute of bold metaphors, but a talent to employ them should be cultivated by observation and exercise.

## CHAPTER V.

## ANTITHESES.

34. *The Mind notices both Similarities and Differences of Objects.*—WE have remarked under Comparison that it is a law of the mind to observe the similarity of objects, in one or more particulars, that differ in other respects. It is also a law of the mind's action to observe the differences of objects, in one or more particulars, that are alike in all other respects. On the action of these laws does the mind depend for the classification of facts and objects. Promptitude and power in this exercise characterize the strongest minds.

35. *Definitions and Illustrations.*—Antithesis (from the Greek *αντι*, *against*, and *τιθημι*, *to place*) is the collocation of two objects together that differ distinctly, at least in one particular, and agree in others.

The simplest antitheses are those in which the attention is called to the difference between two objects of the same kind for the purpose of definition. For instance, "The brig is a square-rigged vessel with two masts; the sloop is a fore-and-aft-rigged vessel with one mast and a jib-stay."

"The old Roman had an aquiline nose, the Greek, a nose long and straight."



The antithesis becomes more striking and pleasing if the contrast exists in more than one particular, while the likeness in other particulars remains. Thus, "Caesar died a violent death, but his empire remained; Cromwell died a natural death, but his empire vanished."

Antithesis is the union of objects by their differences, and exhibits that power of mind without which there can be no correct generalization nor accurate analysis. It should therefore be assiduously cultivated. It sharpens the outline of the objects, whether material or mental, which are at the same time compared and contrasted, and makes an impression of their relative character more vivid than could otherwise be produced.

The higher exercise of this power is exhibited in detecting and presenting differences between objects that seem, to a casual observer, to be alike; but the highest of all is the presentation both of differences and of similarities at the same time between objects that were never classified together before. Upon the degree in which these compared and contrasted points exist, and the vividness with which they are expressed, depend the force and beauty of the antithesis.

"Melissa, like the bee, gathers honey from every weed; while Arachne, like the spider, sucks poison from the fairest flowers." In this instance it will be seen that Melissa and Arachne are alike in nearly all respects, being both girls; but they differ in two respects: Melissa gathers instruction as the bee gathers honey, while Arachne gathers bad influences as the

spider gathers poison; and Melissa gathers her instruction from unfavorable sources, "weeds," while Arachne gathers her bad influences from good sources, "the fairest flowers."

"The lamb gambols alike through the green pastures or to the place of slaughter. Up to the last flutter of her wings, the bird ceases not to trill her matins upon the air. But the only immortal being upon the earth lives in dread of death. The only being to whom death is an impossibility fears every day that it will come."

In this instance, the lamb and the bird, standing for all brute animals, are compared by antithesis with man. Both classes are alike, in being exposed to death, but the differences are, they are mortal, he at once mortal and immortal; and again, they do not fear to die, though death ends them; he does fear to die, though death does not end him. Who does not see that the idea of both mortality and immortality are rendered more vivid by such an antithesis?

"Here lies the great — False marble, where?  
Nothing but sordid dust lies here!"

The antithesis in this consists in the two pictures that the marble monument might suggest of the man whose body is buried beneath it—either "the great," as he was when living, or "the sordid dust," which the body is now.

Many excellent specimens of antithesis are found in the Holy Scriptures. It was often employed by the Saviour in his necessarily condensed expressions, in which the greatest possible amount of thought was stored up for all future generations. "He that hath, to him shall be given; he that hath not, from him

shall be taken that which he hath," is antithetical, equivalent to, "He that *really* hath (or improves what he has), shall have more; while he that does not *really* have any thing (that is, does not *improve* any thing), shall lose what he has." The principle of this antithetical expression is uttered in the proverb, "Rivers run to the sea."

The prevalence of antithesis is so great in good composition, and it is so mingled with the various figures of speech, that it is exceedingly difficult in some instances to detect it, or to discriminate between it and comparison and metaphor. The following passage undoubtedly owes much of its impressiveness to the antithesis of its thoughts.

"The infinity of worlds, and the narrow spot of earth which we call our home—the eternity of ages, and the few hours of life—the almighty power of God, and human nothingness—it is impossible to think of these in succession without a feeling like that which is produced by the sublimest eloquence."

It will be seen in the above that, first, "the infinity of worlds" and "the narrow spot of earth called home" are supposed to be alike as *space*, but antithetic in size only; then "eternity" and "the few hours" are alike as *duration*, antithetic in extent or amount; "almighty power" and "human nothingness" are alike as *power*, for by "nothingness" is really meant only *feebleness*, but antithetic in degree; and these antitheses are justly pronounced impressive.

36. *Effect of Antitheses.* — Scientific statements acquire precision from antithesis. "In the animal body," says Tyndall, in his "Heat and Mode of Mo-

tion," "vegetable substances are brought again into contact with their beloved oxygen, and they burn within us as a fire burns in a grate." This is a comparison. But he adds: "In the plant the clock is wound up, in the animal it runs down. In the plant the atoms are separated, in the animal they re-combine." This is antithesis.

Almost every vivid and impressive author makes a judicious use of antitheses. The writings of Macaulay, Bancroft, and of many, though not all other eminent historians, ancient and modern, sparkle with them. "That there are fifty thousand thieves in London," says Macaulay, "is a very melancholy fact. But looked at in one point of view, it is a reason for exultation. For what other city could maintain fifty thousand thieves?" The antithesis consists between the first view of a city having fifty thousand thieves as a place of crime and wretchedness, and the second view of the same city as a place able to support fifty thousand thieves without perceptibly injuring its prosperity.

37. *Antithetical Proverbs.*—Antithesis gives beauty and force to many of the most common proverbs in all languages.

"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." "The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are as bold as a lion." "Open rebuke is better than secret love." "There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous." The antithesis in this last proverb consists in

perceiving both a strange likeness and unlikeness in two expressions that would be supposed to have nothing in common—nearly alike in extravagance or divergence from ordinary thought, totally unlike in their nature and effects.

38. *Antithetical Descriptions*.—It is an exercise of thought closely akin to antithesis, and may be regarded as a department of this rhetorical figure, when seemingly incongruous or widely different qualities are presented as belonging to the same object. This practice calls the attention not to two objects alike in many points and differing in one or more, but to *qualities* both different and alike, inhering in the same object. Thus Young says of life :

“Life has no value as an end, but means ;  
An end, deplorable ! a means, divine !  
When 'tis our *all* 'tis *nothing* ; worse than naught ;  
A nest of pains ; when held as *nothing, much*.”

Bulwer says, “The Spartans had no respect for any other cultivation of the mind than that which produced bold men and short sentences.” “Sparta became a nation of misers precisely because it could not become a nation of spendthrifts.”\*

This kind of thought and expression is often employed by essayists, historians, and orators. It is apt to degenerate into a mannerism, and, like all antithesis, should be sparingly used. The excessive use of it may be seen in the writings of Seneca, in such works as Colton's “Lacon,” Montesquieu's “Spirit of Laws,” Emerson's “Essays,” and many others. Vic-

\* Bulwer's *Athens : its Rise and Fall*, book i. chap. ix.

tor Hugo thus antithetically describes Wellington and Napoleon :

“ Napoleon and Wellington : they are not enemies, they are opposites. Never has God, who takes pleasure in antithesis, made a more striking contrast and a more extraordinary meeting. On one side, precision, foresight, geometry, prudence, retreat assured, reserves economized, obstinate composure, imperturbable method, strategy to profit by the ground, tactics to balance battalions, carnage drawn to the line, war directed watch in hand, nothing left voluntarily to chance, ancient classic courage, absolute correctness : on the other hand, intuition, inspiration, a military marvel, a superhuman instinct, a flashing glance, a mysterious something which gazes like the eagle and strikes like the thunderbolt ; prodigious art in disdainful impetuosity, all the mysteries of a deep soul, intimacy with Destiny, river, plain, forest, hill commanded, and in some sort forced to obey, the despot going even so far as to tyrannize over the battle-field, faith in a star joined to strategic science, increasing it, but disturbing it.”

39. *Antitheses and Comparisons combined.*—Antitheses are sometimes united with comparisons and far extended, in the portraiture of two similar and dissimilar characters, or of two similar ages, or governments, countries, or objects of any kind that will admit of such a description. Such portraitures are usually labored and wearisome ; and among the many that have been attempted, but few are satisfactory. One of the most noted is the comparison of Dryden and Pope, as poets, by Dr. Samuel Johnson. We give two or three sentences as specimens :

“ Dryden knew more of man in his general nature, and Pope in his local manners. The notions of Dryden were formed by comprehensive speculation, and those of Pope by minute attention. There is more dignity in the knowledge of Dryden, and more certainty in that of Pope. \* \* \* Dryden is sometimes vehement and rapid ; Pope is always smooth, uniform, and gentle. Dryden’s page is a natural field, rising into inequalities, and diversified by the varied

exuberance of abundant vegetation ; Pope's is a velvet lawn, shorn by the scythe, and levelled by the roller. \* \* \* If the flights of Dryden, therefore, are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant. Dryden often surpasses expectation, and Pope never falls below it. Dryden is read with frequent astonishment, and Pope with perpetual delight."

Such antithetical comparisons of two or more similar characters were often made, especially by writers in the eighteenth century, but too frequently the writer is either tempted to strain the truth for the sake of the contrast, or to make it more verbal than real, while the ostentatious display of art in the style will displease, unless both the sound and sense are unobjectionable.

40. *Should Antithesis be cultivated?*—As it regards the cultivation of this figure of thought and speech, it may be observed that few use it efficiently, and that when well used it is exceedingly pleasing and impressive. It undoubtedly requires patient study. It is a characteristic of the most cultivated ages and authors. Like the most advanced music, it is appreciated fully only by the highly educated. The habit of employing it well should be acquired.

41. *The Epigram.*—Antithesis generally gives point to an Epigram. An Epigram proper is a sentence in prose, or a short poem, treating only of one thing, and embracing some striking or ingenious thought. Usually the thought is antithetically expressed. One of the oldest, translated from the Greek of Callimachus, on the death of his friend Heraclitus, a poet, we give as follows :

"I heard thy fate, loved friend, and dropped a tear;  
 Rushed on my mind the scenes of many a year,  
 When on our chat sun after sun went down.  
 But thou hast long been dust—thy days are flown!  
 Yet still thy songs survive; nor these shall Doom,  
 All-spoiler he, with withering touch consume."

The epigram is now made to embrace any brief expression of a startling thought.

"Silence is the most effective eloquence."

"Riches empty the soul and the pocket; poverty replenishes both."

Hesiod says: "How often is a half greater than the whole!"

"He described the whole world—and also the West Indies."

Such expressions are allied to wit, in which antithesis is often employed.

#### 42. *Further Examples, and Conclusion.*

"Is not wild Shakspeare thine and nature's boast?"

"He that's convinced against his will  
 Is of the same opinion still."

"A fool with judges; among fools a judge."

"Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven."

Dr. Campbell justly remarks: "The excess itself," in the use of antithesis, "into which some writers have fallen, is an evidence of its value—of the lustre and emphasis which antithesis is calculated to give to the expression. There is no risk of intemperance in using a liquor which has neither spirit nor flavor."

An antithetical *form* of expression, when there is no contrast in the thoughts, is jejune and displeasing.



## CHAPTER VI.

## ALLEGORIES AND FABLES.

43. *Definition, and Illustrations.* — An Allegory is a fictitious narrative or description so constructed as to suggest thoughts and facts entirely different from those which it appears to relate. The word is derived from the Greek *αλλος*, *another*, and *αγορευω* *to speak*, and means literally *what speaks another thing*; that is, it speaks one thing, and *means* another.

The nature of it will be best appreciated by studying some examples.

In the prophesy of Hosea, chap. x. ver. 1, we read, "Israel is an empty vine." This is called either a metaphor or a trope, because "vine" is used in a figurative sense for a "nation" preserved by Jehovah as a grape-vine is cared for by a gardener. It will be observed that "Israel" is *mentioned*, so that no ingenuity is required on the part of the reader to determine what the writer means. Now let us suppose that the word "Israel" was not mentioned, but that the writer should describe a "vine," but yet so describe it that the reader should soon perceive that the writer *meant to have him think about a nation*, which he was describing under the figure of a vine. This would be an Allegory.

Fortunately we have just such an instance in the eightieth Psalm.

"Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt." [Observe, the writer does not inform us that vine represents the nation of Israel. If he did so, he would begin with a *comparison*, or he might use a *metaphor*, but he leaves it to our discrimination to perceive that though he says "vine," he means *Israel*.] "Thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it." [It would have been more *allegorical* to say, Thou hast rooted up the wild vines, and planted it.] "Thou preparedst room for it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land. The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars; she sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river. Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by do pluck her? The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it. Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts, look down from heaven, and behold and visit this vine."

This is a beautiful allegory, and the Bible has several more good specimens.

The parable of the Prodigal Son is a pure allegory. No key to its real meaning is given, but every reader of good sense knows that it is designed to convey a meaning entirely different from the literal signification of the words. It is so with all the parables of the Saviour, all being allegorical. In the Book of Proverbs, chap. ix., and the first six verses, a short Allegory will be found.

44. *The Fable, and Illustrations.*—The word *fable* is derived from the Latin *fabula*, and meant originally nearly the same thing as an allegory, a fictitious narrative. But as it is contrary to the genius of the English language to have two words meaning precisely the same thing, *fable*, by usage, has acquired a different shade of signification.

A Fable is a fictitious story, in itself improbable,

generally impossible, but nevertheless conveying or illustrating some moral instruction, or some opinion.

It differs from an Allegory, first, in being improbable and necessarily fictitious, and second, in conveying generally one simple moral lesson, or opinion, without exhibiting numerous points of similarity, as the Allegory does, between the thing described and the instruction meant.

In the Second Book of Kings, chap. xiv. ver. 9, we read :

"The thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon, saying, Give thy daughter to my son to wife : and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trode down the thistle."

This of course could not be true, and it is therefore a *fable*, but the meaning of it was well understood when it was first uttered.

No better fables have ever been written than the famous productions commonly called the Fables of Æsop, which have probably been wrought into their present expressiveness and beauty by many different minds.

45. *The Use of Fables.*—Fables are seldom introduced into sober composition to illustrate and enforce truth, on account of the difficulty of constructing one that shall be at the same time dignified and appropriate. They are generally composed by writers who have a genius for them, or who study to produce them, and they are often alluded to or quoted by other writers. Among the ancient Athenians it was a common amusement for some one at a dinner-table

to relate a fable for the gratification of his friends. Roman history presents an instance in which a fable was invented and related with good effect. The Plebeians were in rebellion against the Patricians, when, to appease their violence, Menenius Agrippa is said to have related to the people the following fable:

"Once on a time all the members of the body revolted against the Belly, because it received every thing and contributed nothing. So the Hand said it would no longer carry food to the Mouth; the Mouth said it would no longer receive it; and the Teeth said they would no longer chew it. They all declared they would no longer slave, as they had done, for the lazy and ungrateful Belly. So they rose in insurrection; but, lo! while the rebellious members sought to punish the Belly, they languished and punished themselves."\*

46. *Further Illustrations of the Allegory.*—Allegories are much more frequently employed. It would be easy to collect a volume of them from the best authors in the English language.

Plato, in one of his profound Dialogues,† describes an under-ground cave, having an opening toward the light of a great fire, peopled by persons who have worn chains on their legs and necks all their lives. Between the fire and the miserable creatures is a road, and they are amusing themselves with looking at their own shadows on the opposite wall and listening to words that seem to come from the images, but are only echoes of their own voices. The description is

\* This story, related in Roman history, has been repeated by many; among others, by Shakspeare in *Coriolanus*, act i. scene 1, who has expanded it without improvement. The apostle Paul has presented the same illustration, in the form of a supposition, very forcibly in 1 Corinthians xii. 20.

† The Republic, book vii. chap. i.

carried out into several pages, and is an allegory describing the miserable condition of men in this world, as it seemed to Plato.

Often what may properly be considered an allegory is introduced by a few words of explanation that put the reader upon the right track, and make it easy for him to understand the author's real meaning. Thus Coleridge, in his "*Biographia Literaria*," proposes an association of learned men to examine all literary productions as they appear, and decide upon their merits. He calls this proposed association a "critical machine." These words seem to have suggested to him such correspondences between the workings of a critical association and a machine as naturally shaped themselves into an allegory, thus:

"Should any literary Quixote\* find himself provoked by its sounds and regular movements, I should admonish him, with Sancho Panza, that it is no giant, but a windmill; there it stands on its own place and its own hillock, never goes out of its way to attack any one, and to none and from none either gives or asks assistance. When the public press has poured in any part of its produce between its mill-stones, it grinds it off, one man's sack the same as another, and with whatever wind may then happen to be blowing. All the two-and-thirty winds are alike its friends. Of the whole wide atmosphere it does not desire a single finger-breadth more than what is necessary for its sails to turn round in. But this space must be left free and unimpeded. Gnats, beetles, wasps, bottle-flies, and the whole tribe of ephemerals and insignificants, may flit in and out and between; may hum, and buzz, and jar; may shrill their tiny pipes, and wind their puny horns, unchastised and unnoticed. But idlers and bravadoes of larger size and prouder show must beware how they place themselves within its sweep. Much less may they presume to lay hands

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\* Referring to Don Quixote, who is represented as a crazy knight, in one instance fighting with a windmill, of which fact he is informed by his servant Sancho Panza.

on the sails, the strength of which is neither greater nor less than as the wind is which drives them round. Whomsoever the remorseless arm slings aloft, or whirls along with it in the air, he has himself alone to blame; though, when the same arm throws him from it, it will more often double than break the force of his fall.”\*

Such allegories have been called continued metaphors, but incorrectly. A metaphor is a condensed single comparison between two objects, but this is a series of comparisons or strange likenesses between two different objects. Each item in the description, for instance, of the above critical windmill, has some reference to the effect that the association imagined might have.

Some good specimens of allegories are, “The Empire of Poetry,” by Fontenelle (translated from the French); “The Hill of Science,” by Dr. Aiken, and “The Mountains of Miseries” (and several others, in the *Spectator*), by Addison; “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” by Bunyan; “The Celestial Railroad,” by Hawthorne, and the “Dream of the Destruction of the Bible,” by Rogers.

47. *Short Allegories*.—It must not be supposed that allegories are necessarily long. They are often brief. Thus when Quintilian, pleading for a polished style of writing, makes use of the following expressions, he really employs an allegory, and such allegories are common.

“I should prefer a block of Parian marble to a statue, cut even by the hand of a Praxiteles out of a millstone; but were the same master to polish that block, it would become more precious, through his art, than its own value.”

Quintilian here did not intend primarily to express

\* Coleridge’s *Complete Works* (New York, 1854), vol. iii. p. 454.

any opinion about the comparative value of marble and coarse stones; but while he used those words he intended that his readers should understand that a good thought poorly expressed (a block of marble roughly hewed) is better than a poor thought rhetorically expressed (a statue made of a millstone by Praxiteles); but that he would prefer the good thought beautifully expressed (the marble block wrought up and polished).

Happy is the author who can judiciously illustrate and ornament his productions with the occasional use of allegory.

48. *Relation of Allegory to Art.*—The principle of the Allegory is the foundation of a large department of the works of art; Temperance is represented as a woman with a bridle; Firmness as a woman leaning against a pillar. Hope, Courage, War, Peace, Commerce, Life, Death, all have their appropriate emblems. An emblematic painting may be intrinsically beautiful, and also strikingly illustrate some passion or the result of some custom, or some law of mind. The "Voyage of Life" has been allegorically presented in a series of pictures. The career of a gambler, a drunkard, an ambitious man, a Christian, might be represented in a series of paintings or statues. Even architecture derives an interest from the principle of the Allegory. The heavy Gothic style is felt to symbolize mystery, profundity, and to awaken reverence, and is therefore suited to a house of worship, while the lighter Grecian styles betoken rather cheerfulness and social pleasure. Many of these suggestions may be deemed

fanciful, but it will be found that allegory is very prevalent in literature and art, and that its principles will richly deserve careful attention.

49. *Elements of a good Allegory.*—Three qualities are demanded in every written allegory :

(1.) The narrative must be so constructed as to please and interest, even if the real lesson designed to be conveyed is overlooked.

(2.) The real lesson or object of the Allegory should be easily seen ; and if there would be any doubt about its being understood, let a few words of explanation be prefaced.

(3.) Both meanings of the Allegory should, if possible, be valuable.

A strict adherence to an order of nature or facts in a long allegory, so that every thing said of the secondary subject should illustrate some truth, is not always possible, and the writer of an allegory or parable is allowed to combine incidents in any way that imagination, guided by reason, sees conducive to the end in view.

#### EXAMPLES OF ALLEGORY.

Inasmuch as this figure is much more frequently employed by some good writers than has been usually supposed, we give a few more specimens.

The first two are from Macaulay :

“The final and permanent fruits of liberty are wisdom, moderation, and mercy. Its immediate effects are often atrocious crimes, conflicting errors, skepticism on points the most clear, dogmatism on points the most mysterious. It is just at this crisis that its enemies love to exhibit it. They pull down the scaffolding from the half-



finished edifice; they point to the flying dust, the falling bricks, the comfortless rooms, the frightful irregularity of the whole appearance, and then ask in scorn where the promised splendor and comfort are to be found."

"A pedestrian may show as much muscular vigor on a treadmill as on the highway road. But on the road his vigor will assuredly carry him forward; on the treadmill he will not advance an inch. The ancient philosophy was a treadmill, not a path."

"There stands an ancient architectural pile, with tokens of its venerable age covering it from its corner-stone to its topmost turret; and some imagine these to be tokens of decay, while to others they indicate, by the years they chronicle, a massiveness that can yet defy more centuries than it has weathered years. Its foundation is buried in the accumulated mould and clustered masses of many generations. Its walls are mantled and hidden by parasitic vines. Its apartments are some of them dark and cold, as if their very cement were dissolving in chilly vapors. Others, built against the walls, were never framed into them; and now their ceilings are broken, their floors are uneven as the surface of a billow, their timbers seem less to sustain one another than to break one another's fall. You dig away the mould, and lo! the foundation was laid by no mortal hand; it is primitive rock that strikes its roots down an unfathomable depth into the solid earth, so that no frosts can heave it, no convulsions shake it. Such an edifice is Christianity" (Dr. A. P. Peabody's *Christianity the Religion of Nature*).

## CHAPTER VII.

## HYPERBOLES, OR EXTRAVAGANT EXPRESSIONS.

50. *Definition.*—AN expression which, literally understood, means more than the author really intends to utter, is called a Hyperbole. The word is derived from two Greek words which signify to *throw beyond*.

Under the influence of strong emotion, this is the most natural and the most common figure of speech. It abounds in conversation, oratory, poetry, in descriptions of persons, places, and events, and indeed is found in almost every species of composition.

The last verse of the Gospel according to St. John informs us, "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." This can not be supposed to be the literal, arithmetical calculation of the writer, but it is a hyperbolical way of conveying the thought that what he had written was but a scanty description of the deeds and words of the eventful life of Jesus. There are but a few passages of the Bible undoubtedly hyperbolical.

51. *Is Hyperbole morally Wrong?*—Some critics and moralists have wholly disapproved of its use, but such persons are hypercritical, if not hyperbolical, and,

upon a narrow, indiscriminating basis of morality and taste, would rob the world of the most of its healthful passion and poetry. One of the chief elements of efficiency in oratory, and one of the chief charms of poetry, is Hyperbole. Language is not always to be understood literally, or according to what the words would mean if employed without passion and with scientific precision, but according to what the speaker may be properly supposed to mean when he uses it. The hearer is presumed to be able to make all due allowance for strong emotion, and there is a pleasure in feeling the power communicated to thought even by extravagant expression.

Many of the common expressions used in conversation and in epistolary writings are not designed to be construed with literal exactness. Washington, when elected Commander-in-chief of the American forces in 1775, wrote to his wife thus: "I should enjoy *more real happiness* with you at home than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years." Evidently he meant simply to be understood that it was a great sacrifice for him to yield the pleasures of domestic life, to respond to the call of his country. Many years afterward, though his writings are generally very cool and free from extravagance, he wrote to another lady thus: "None of which events, however, nor all of them together, have been able to eradicate from my mind the recollection of those happy moments, *the happiest of my life*, which I have enjoyed in your company."

Dr. Franklin, writing to David Hume, the historian, said: "We are told that gold and silver in Solomon's time were so plenty, as to be of no more value in his country than the stones in the street. You have at present just such a plenty—of wisdom." This was not designed to be flattery, but it was a strong way of expressing his estimation of the accomplishments of Hume and his friends.

Even a scientific writer, Gaussen, speaking of the effects of spring on vegetation, says: "*The whole creation*" (literally, of course, including dead timber, stones, the stars, and all animals, angels, and other existences), "as if raised from a tomb, is penetrated with life, and pulsates with joy." No one could be so inconsiderate as to suppose that "the whole creation" in the above sentence means the same as in the following: "The whole creation, taken together, forms one grand, connected system, the sublime Cosmos, fitly exhibiting the power and wisdom of God."

52. *The Philosophy of Hyperbole*. — It is a law of the mind that whatever occupies the attention at present should assume a disproportionate relative magnitude; and if others surrender themselves to the influence of that mind, they naturally, and generally unconsciously, expect to receive impressions and thoughts that are really magnified by the emotion and interest of the author. Thus, in a treatise on Physiology, Chemistry, Astronomy, Agriculture, Painting, or any other subject, we expect to see its claims set forth in what would be an undue prominence if we were not intelligent enough to supplement the information and

emotion thus acquired, by the successive examination of other subjects. Each subject is, in its turn, hyperbolically presented.

53. *Prevalence of Hyperbole, and Examples.*—From this fact, hyperbole abounds in sermons, orations, and eloquent addresses of every kind. The eccentric orator Randolph, in one of his speeches in Congress, exclaimed: "And what, sir, is debt? In an individual it is slavery. It is slavery of the worst sort, surpassing that of the West India Islands." Could he have meant to be understood literally?

Hon. Rufus Choate, describing what he conceived to be the evils of electing judges by a popular vote, exclaimed: "So nominated, the candidate is put through a violent election, abused by the press, abused on the stump, accused a thousand times over with being very little of a lawyer, and a good deal of a knave and a boor: and, after being tossed on this kind of a blanket for some uneasy months, is chosen by a majority of ten votes out of a hundred thousand, and comes into court breathless, terrified, with perspiration in drops on his brow, wondering how he ever got there, to take his seat on the bench."

However unbecoming the excessive use of Hyperbole may be regarded, it is evident that many of the best creations of ancient and modern times would be sadly mutilated and emasculated, were all hyperbolical expressions and sentiments expunged.

Often writers and speakers assume a style of extravagant expression which is evidently not intended to be understood literally, but nevertheless is felt to be

much more convincing and forcible than an exact statement of what they really do believe would be. Thus an English writer describes the north-east wind:

“Boreas is a ruffian and a bully, but the north-east is a rascal. It withers like an evil eye; it blights like a parent's curse; unkindier than ingratitude; more biting than forgotten benefits. It comes with sickness on its wings, and rejoices only the doctor and the sexton. While it reigns, no fire heats, no raiment comforts, no walls protect. It deflowers the earth, and it wans the sky. The ghastliest of hues overspreads the face of things, and collapsing Nature seems expiring of cholera.”

Undoubtedly many critics would pronounce the above extravagant, as indeed we have seen in some treatises on Rhetoric some of the most impressive hyperboles of Shakspeare and other writers torn out of their connections, and after the life-blood has run out of them, pronounced extravagant and ugly! The merit of such expressions depends much upon the ability and mood of the hearer.

54. *Much used in Poetry, Wit, Argument, etc.*—Poetry of every kind abounds in Hyperbole, as we shall show when we come to treat of it. Wit also uses it as its most efficient aid, and it is not wanting, though it is generally out of place, in treatises on science.

Hyperbole is often employed in argument, to show the inconsistency of an opponent's position, by imagining it to be carried out into extreme results: the effects of alcoholic drinks, for instance, if all should drink; the effects of infidelity, if mothers and children and all others were to have no faith in God. Such a use of Hyperbole, though it leads to the most extrava-

gant conceptions, is justifiable, if kept within the limits of a correct logic.

Poetical Hyperbole is an exaggeration indulged in simply for the pleasure of exercising the imagination, and is as proper and healthful as any other mental exercise, confined to its own legitimate territory.

55. *Cautions upon the Use of Hyperbole.*—Several cautions, however, should be observed in its employment.

(1.) Let it be used sparingly. Like other spice, if excessive, it becomes disagreeable.

(2.) Let it never be employed when a person of ordinary discrimination would not be able to understand its real meaning, or when the language would be liable to be literally construed, and if so, would convey injurious or pernicious sentiment.

(3.) Let it not be used in any production where scientific precision might justly be expected, or upon any subject in which extravagance would properly be considered incongruous and offensive.

(4.) Let it not be sought, but be employed only when strong feeling naturally prompts it.

(5.) Finally, let it not be forgotten that the common and coarser kinds of Hyperbole are characteristics of ignorance, and are more and more discarded as the mind becomes disciplined by careful thought and to accurate expression. It is only the indiscriminating who pronounce some day in every successive summer the hottest they ever knew, and some day in every winter the coldest, the last good sermon they heard the best, and who are constantly using the superlative

degree. Conversationists of this kind soon cease to be credited by their intelligent friends, and speakers and writers who abound in hyperboles are seldom popular long, or if so, are not fully believed even when they tell the truth. Hyperbole, extravagantly used, degenerates into Bombast.

56. *Liptotes*.—This is precisely the reverse of Hyperbole. It is a form of thought by which, in seeming to lessen, we actually increase the force of an expression. Thus, when we say, "These are not the words of a child," we mean "These are the words of a wise man." "I can not eulogize such a man," means, perhaps, I despise him.



## CHAPTER VIII.

## IRONY.

57. *Definition.*—IRONY is such a use of language as will convey to an intelligent hearer a meaning precisely opposite to what the language, literally understood, would express.

When the prophets of Baal were striving in vain by cries to induce some demonstrations of the presence and power of their god, Elijah, the prophet of Jehovah, tauntingly said to them, "Cry aloud: for he is a god! Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked!"

58. *How Indicated.*—Of course, in the use of Irony the intonation of the voice must be such as will indicate the speaker's real meaning. In writing, the punctuation should, as far as possible, be made to aid the perception of the reader. Sometimes the intention of a writer to be ironical is not perceived by the reader, and unfortunately the author is understood to affirm just what he meant to make appear so ridiculous that no one would believe it. Some have thought that the expression of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians xii. 16, is ironical, and should be printed in this way: "Nevertheless, being crafty, I caught you

with guile!" That is, "How absurd to suppose, if what I have said is true, that I could have used craft and guile!"

59. *The Philosophy of Irony.*—The philosophy of it seems to be, that some thoughts which the author wishes to repel are so manifestly false that they need only to be distinctly uttered to make the hearer see their falsity and reject them with indignity. Or, if the irony is playful, the hearer is pleased with the ingenuity of the author, who can express, as if true, such absurd ideas. The absurdity also of the sentiment is clearly exposed.

Therefore, Irony has two offices: to expose false sentiment by asserting it so baldly as to induce others to see its falsity, and to present ludicrously inconsistent associations as though true, but in such a way as to amuse and perhaps instruct the hearer. It is an efficient expositor of falsehood, though it acts itself under the guise of falsehood (illustrating the maxim "that it takes a rogue to catch a rogue").

Thus Shakspeare represents Marc Antony as attempting artfully to inflame the Roman people against Brutus because he had stabbed Cæsar; and ever and anon, when quoting the words of Brutus, he adds,

"And Brutus is an honorable man!"

The proper intonation intimates that Brutus is very dishonorable man, and the rabble are represented as soon understanding the speaker.

Mr. Fox, in Parliament, responded to an opponent in a passage that has often been quoted, and is a good specimen of Irony:

“ ‘But we must pause!’ says the honorable gentleman. If a man were present now at the field of slaughter, and were to inquire for what they were fighting, ‘Fighting!’ would be the answer; ‘they are not fighting; they are pausing.’ Why is that man expiring? Why is that other writhing with agony? What means this inexplicable fury? The answer must be, ‘You are quite wrong, sir; you deceive yourself; they are not fighting; do not disturb them; they are merely *pausing*!’ Lord help you, sir, they are not angry with one another; they have now no cause of quarrel, but their country thinks that there should be a *pause*!’ ”

By such expressions as the above, Mr. Fox ridiculed the idea that had been advanced, that the great events then occurring were simply a “pause” in history.

Dr. Johnson, in his indignant letter to Lord Chesterfield, refusing his patronage and favor which were not offered till he began to be popular and did not need assistance, inquires: “Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached ground, encounters him with help?” Of course Johnson does not ask such a question for information, but intends by his question to intimate precisely the opposite idea as the truth.

Shakspeare, that great master of almost every passion, often employs Irony. In King Lear, Cordelia is represented as ridiculing a blunt plain-speaking man as coarse and rude, thus:

“ This is some fellow,  
Who, having been praised for bluntness, doth affect  
A saucy roughness; and constrains the garb,  
Quite from his nature. *He can not flatter, he!*  
*An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth:*  
*An they will take it so; if not, 'tis plain.* ”

The words printed in italics are a repetition by Cordelia of what the rough man is supposed to say of himself craftily. She repeats them, to show their falsity, simply by a peculiar emphasis. This kind of irony is often prompted by anger.

60. *Irony in Controversy*.—Controversialists sometimes resort to Irony to expose the ridiculousness of the errors which they oppose. Thus Henry Rogers\* ironically asks deists to construct a book as ingenious and powerful as the Bible. He begs of them, "Do not let your imaginative forms be so *exquisite* as to make mankind take them for genuine history" [as they have taken the Bible]; "do not, I warn you, so transcend Homer and Shakspeare, as to make people fancy your fable fact! Or else not only will you fail of your object, but will have added unexpectedly another to the many historical religions!"

This is exquisite Irony, as is the whole letter from which it is taken. None can deny the efficiency of this weapon, when properly used, either to expose error, or meanness, or ignorance, or vice.

Archbishop Hare† has a long argument, in the form of a letter, to dissuade young clergymen from studying the Bible, so written as to show that such a neglect as it pretends to advise would be cowardly and guilty. Such ironical writing, when well done, is exceedingly efficient.

\* The Greyson Letters: Selections from the Correspondence of R. G. H. Greyson, Esq. Edited by Henry Rogers (Boston, 1857), p. 428.

† The Works of Dr. Francis Hare, Lord Bishop of Chichester (London, 1746), vol. ii. p. 1-38.

61. *Irony intended to Amuse.*—The lighter use of Irony, simply to amuse, may be seen principally in humorous productions. Some whole volumes have a vein of irony running through them; and while to superficial readers they appear to be sober, are really ridiculing some theory or practice. This covert, gentle irony, it is, that gives such an inexpressible charm to such works, as “Don Quixote,” the “Vicar of Wakefield,” and many of the writings of Dean Swift and Sydney Smith. Washington Irving, in his “Knickerbocker’s History of New York,” has given us some of the best specimens of this kind of irony. We have room but for a single passage :

“Of the creation of the world we have a thousand contradictory accounts; and though a very satisfactory one is furnished us by divine revelation, yet every philosopher feels himself in honor bound to furnish us with a better. As an impartial historian, I consider it my duty to notice their several theories, by which mankind have been so exceedingly edified and instructed.”

Who does not perceive in this a ridicule of the absurd theories of the origin of the world that have been promulgated?

One of the most successful specimens of ironical writing is a pamphlet written by the witty Irishman, Swift, entitled, “A Modest Proposal to the Public for preventing the Children of Poor People in Ireland from being a Burden to their Country, and for making them Beneficial to the Public?” The “modest proposal” is that the little children be fattened and used for food! He enters into grave statistical calculations of the pecuniary profit of such a course, written with such an appearance of candor and cool brutality, that

it is said a contemporary writer in France was actually deceived by it, and denounced it as horribly inhuman. The design of Swift was to censure England for an alleged disregard for the rights of the Irish people.

Henry Ward Beecher commends fishing thus:

"Alas! that a world should be so barbarous as to condemn piscatory sports so long as they contribute to exercise taste, sentiment, and moral enjoyment; and that all objection ceases when a man can prove that he labored for his mouth alone. It is all right, if it was eating that he had in mind. The frying-pan is in universal favor. This is the modern image that fell down from heaven, which all men hold in reverence!"\*

In the above, an idea which the author disapproves is first soberly stated. It is then repeated in other forms again and again, till the very strength of statement begins to make it ridiculous, and the mind recoils from accepting it, when it becomes Irony. By the punctuation the author indicates that the last sentence alone is ironical. We think the two preceding sentences should be punctuated in the same way. This gradual sliding into irony is common with earnest, eloquent controversialists who have a vein of wit in their nature.

62. *Ironical Questions.*—Irony is often forcibly expressed in the form of questions:

"Can gray hairs render folly venerable?"

Hon. Mr. Fessenden, in the Senate, inquired:

"Are we not men of some degree of sense and discretion? Are we sent here, senators, chosen men of states, representatives, the se-

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\* *Star-Papers; or, Experiences of Art and Nature.* By Henry Ward Beecher (New York, 1855), p. 238.

lectmen of the people in the several districts, without any idea whatever of a correct course of proceeding in this matter?"

So Hon. Mr. Corwin represented the people of Mexico as saying:

"Have you not room in your own country to bury your dead men? If you come into mine, we will *greet* you—with bloody hands, and *welcome* you—to hospitable graves!"

Such questions are not asked because they require an answer, but because the very opposite to what they suggest is true; they are therefore Irony.

63. *Directions upon the Use of Irony.*—The following directions on the use of Irony should be observed.

(1.) Let it be suited to the subject and occasion. If light and humorous, let it not be associated with grave instruction, or the earnest expression of feeling, so as to awaken a sense of inconsistency. If severe and sarcastic, be sure that the occasion will justify it.

(2.) In oral productions the intonations of the voice should always indicate Irony when it is employed; in written productions be careful, either by giving some intimation of your purpose, or by the punctuation, to enable the reader to perceive your meaning, so as not to mistake Irony for the direct expression of sentiment, unless, indeed, it be your sober purpose to leave your expressions obscure, or to test the mental ability of your reader.

(3.) Do not neglect to cultivate the use of so efficient a weapon, but bear in mind that the frequent use of Irony is unpleasant to a well-cultivated taste.

## CHAPTER IX.

## PERSONIFICATION AND PROSOPOPEIA.

64. *Definition.*—WHEN a lifeless object is represented or addressed as though it had life, it is said to be personified.

65. *Philosophy of it.*—Personification is a natural expression of strong feeling connected with the object personified. A child will often vent his anger upon a stone or stick by which he has been struck, and older persons who have not yet passed out of the childhood stage of development are sometimes betrayed into similar folly. Many who would not strike an insensible object may often feel an impulse to blame it. When we censure or praise a senseless thing, we fancy it for the time endowed with life. What seems unreasonable in its rudimentary manifestations may, if done in a cultivated manner, please the taste and task the highest mental energy.

66. *First Degree of Personification.*—Personification exists in three degrees. In Personification of the first degree the object is presented as having some qualities that properly belong only to living creatures.

Thus we speak of an *obedient* ship, or say that a house *befriends* a weary traveller. This degree of Personification is most frequently exhibited by the use of some appellative that strictly applies only to



living beings. In many instances this has become so common, and in many others it requires so little effort of the imagination, that it is scarcely noticed. Trees are called *majestic*, rivers or breezes *gentle*, the spring is said to *smile*, and winter is termed *frowning*, with no conscious excitement or extraordinary effort of the mind.

67. *Often indicated by the Use of Personal Pronouns having Genders.*—This degree of Personification is often exhibited by simply using the masculine or feminine pronoun instead of the neuter. Thus a boat is represented as a female, war as a male, in these expressions: "Pull a stroke or two—away with *her* into deep water;" "War then showed *his* devastations."

In a well-written review article we read:

"Liberalism was rising steadily on all sides. Was the Church to be a Church, to oppose *her* advancing enemy, to curse *him*, to have no terms with *him*?"

In this sentence Liberalism is spoken of as a man, or a masculine enemy, the Church (as often in the Bible) is spoken of as a woman. The reviewer adds another sentence, in which he begins with the same personification, but absurdly mixes his metaphors, and metamorphoses the woman into a ship, thus:

"Or was *she* [the Church] to let *him* [Liberalism] in, to become a mere *receptacle* for sects, and gradually *drift* away with the liberal tide from her old orthodox moorings?"

It would be strange indeed to see a woman "drift away from her moorings?"

An eloquent writer says:

"Science can not work with a halter about *her* neck."

Rev. Dr. Hitchcock, in speaking of the effects of old age, says :

"The mind, too, dependent on bodily organization by unalterable laws for its free exercise, sympathizes in the decline of the physical powers. The proud heights which she once scaled can no longer be reached ; the heavy blows which she once dealt out can no longer be given. \* \* \* First of all, the memory feels the change, and reels, and staggers, and sinks under her charge. Next, the judgment begins to waver ; and, last of all, the imagination comes fluttering to the earth."

Rev. Dr. Bellows, in a sermon, thus represents truth :

"Truth is as jealous, capricious, and shy a mistress as was ever wooed. She eludes her lover as a hunted deer her pursuer. Her votary must follow her in all the circuits and involutions of her flight—now doubling on her track, now making the North Star, and now the Southern Cross her beacon—now on the earth, now in water or wood, and again in the sky, but always having it for her purpose to lead her wooer through every parallel and point of latitude and longitude in her domain, that he may view her and her possessions from all quarters of the moral compass, and see her full shape and whole fortune—and so be the more in love with his holy, heavenly bride, his destined partner for eternity.\*

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\* Sometimes we meet with *her* and *his* instead of *its* in the English Bible, and in other ancient books, when no personification was intended ; for *its*, the possessive case of *it*, is a modern word, and began to be used only about the middle of the 16th century, and did not become common till many years after. In such expressions as "It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise *his* heel;" "Put up thy sword into *his* place," in the Bible, there is no personification, because the neuter possessive pronoun *its* was not then used. From an ignorance of this fact, Dr. Jamieson, in his Rhetoric, wrongly charges Milton with using a false gender in this passage :

" His form  
Had not lost all *her* original brightness,  
Nor appeared less than archangel ruined."

Milton did not wish to use *its*, which was then a novel word ; indeed he employed it only two or three times in his "Paradise Lost." In this case, *forma*, the Latin word for *form*, being feminine, he

Personification by the use of appellatives is very common; by the use of personal pronouns indicating gender it is less common, and care should be taken not to employ it so frequently as to betray a mannerism, and offend good taste.

68. *Personification of the Second Degree.*—The second degree of Personification is the representation of an object as acting, or manifesting emotion, like a thing of life.

"Decay stands with tottering limbs and feeble breath, and lisps to us, with dying life, that we draw nigh the gates."

"We then proceeded south, where the six gigantic columns reared their heads above the ruins."

How much more forcible is this than to say, "The six gigantic columns extended upward above the ruins."

Prescott, in plain narrative style, says:

"A river, a chain of mountains, an imaginary line even, parted them [nations] as far asunder as if oceans rolled between."

Cowper expressed the same thought far more forcibly by personification, when he said:

"Lands intersected by a narrow frith  
Abhor each other."

"The great watch-stars," says Everett, "shut up their holy eyes."

If the student carefully reads the best authors, he will find that personification of this degree is much less common than the first degree. Indeed many vigorous writers and eloquent orators never employ it.

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chose *her* for the possessive case rather than *his*. *Its* is found in some copies of the English Bible once, in Leviticus xxv. 5—"that which groweth of its own accord;" but the translators even here originally used the word *it*.

If used too frequently, the style appears affected and stilted.

69. *Sometimes employed for Conciseness and Convenience only.*—There are, however, personifications of this kind, which are employed not as expressions of excited feeling, but as convenient condensations, to avoid circumlocutions, and the frequent repetitions of long descriptions. Thus the word “nature” is used as though it were the name of a person, when evidently the author does not intend to personify any fancied being or power, but it is more convenient to use that appellation than some such expression as “the plan according to which material things act,” or “the properties which this subject has;” and it is more convenient to represent it as a *person* than to speak of the phenomena described as simple *effects*.

“Nature preserves a wonderful harmony among the animal and vegetable kingdoms.” That is, the plan on which the universe is constructed is such that a wonderful harmony is preserved. Professor Tyn-dall, in his treatise on “Heat, a Mode of Motion,” speaking of the chilling and freezing of the surface of a lake, and the sinking of the cold water to the bottom, says:

“Supposing this to continue, the ice would sink as it was formed, and the process would not cease until the entire water of the lake would be solidified. Death to every living thing in the water would be the consequence. But just when matters become critical, *Nature steps aside from her ordinary proceeding*, causes the water to expand by cooling, and the cold water swims like a scum on the surface of the warmer water underneath.”

This use of the word nature is so common that

another illustration may not be inappropriate, taken from a sermon by Rev. Dr. Huntington. Speaking of Nature, he says :

“Just when *she* discloses to our perceptions any of her grandest pictures, she shuts our lips. Whenever she stirs our sense of the sublime, she sternly tells us, ‘My children, be dumb!’”

This is genuine Personification. But often, as in the former instances, the word is used as a convenient single term or symbol for “the plan of existing things.” If the word God is used instead of Nature, it expresses a different idea, directing the attention to an intelligent, powerful *person*; but the word “nature” simply indicates that the system of material things is such that the result must follow.

In the same way war, peace, commerce, government, law, education, industry, order, temperance, virtue, vice, every particular passion, and almost every complex agency, may be personified, or represented as *acting*, and producing effects, when the author does not intend to express unwonted emotion, but simply finds it the most convenient in this way to express his views of the influence of the thing considered.

We subjoin a few instances:

“Logic does not, like philosophy, enunciate any particular truths, but teaches the principles of universal reasoning.”

Strictly speaking, this is Personification, which is used to avoid some such circumlocution as this: “In treatises on logic, pupils are not taught,” etc.

“What tongue shall describe the ravages of the sword?”

“Of *the sword*,” instead of “produced by war.”

"Photography preserves for us the lineaments of our loved ones long since departed."

Such an expression might arise from strong emotion, and a desire to eulogize photography, and might be employed as a convenient single term instead of many, which would be scientifically more correct.

Often by a little study a writer may condense his style, and at the same time render it more vigorous, by this kind of personification.

Washington gives us a good instance of this kind of personification, which even rises into the higher and genuine figure, when in his first Inaugural Address as President he says:

"I was summoned *by my country, whose voice I can never hear* but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen, with the fondest predilection and in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years."

How much more striking is the following than it would be if for genius, as a person, were substituted the many words necessary to express the same idea scientifically:

"Genius has surrounded your homes with comfort, has given you control of the blind forces of nature, and made the flowers of paradise bloom in the poor man's garden."

How much thought is condensed into this vigorous expression of Wendell Phillips: "The Press says, It is all right; the Pulpit cries, Amen!"

Is not a philosophical truth nervously expressed by these words: "When Feeling comes in at the door, Reason has nothing to do but to jump out by the window?"

Let the student carefully notice the prevalence of this figure in good writings, and endeavor to ascertain whether it is resorted to as a result of strong emotion and a lively fancy, or from mere economy of speech, and the study will naturally improve his own style.

70. *Used in Allegories, and in Humorous Productions.*  
—It is scarcely necessary to add that in allegories Personifications are almost always employed, and that in humorous productions often nations or national characteristics are represented as persons. "John Bull" represents England, or an Englishman; "Brother Jonathan," the United States, or an American. The ancients, from their numerous idols and complicated mythology, could employ a kind of personification of this nature more than the moderns.

An instance in which Personification is extended, and is by some called an Allegory, is afforded by John Quincy Adams in his description of Eloquence:

"At the revival of letters in modern Europe, Eloquence, together with her sister muses, awoke and shook the poppies from her brow. But their torpors still lingered in her veins. In the interval her voice was gone; her favorite languages were extinct; her organs were no longer attuned to harmony, and her hearers could no longer understand her speech. \* \* \* She ascended the tribunals of justice; there she found her child, Persuasion, manacled and pinioned by the letter of the law; there she beheld the image of herself, stammering in barbarous Latin, and staggering under the lumber of a thousand volumes."

This long description, of which we have given only a small part, is not an Allegory, as it does not suggest to us any other meaning than that which lies on its surface. It is simply an extended Personification of the second degree. Such long-drawn-out personifica-

tions must be executed with great skill, or they weary without instructing. Properly wrought, they relieve didactic writing.

71. *The Third Degree of Personification.*—The third degree of Personification is seen when an object is addressed as if alive, and listening to the speaker.

When the mind is sufficiently aroused, this boldest kind of Personification is pre-eminently forcible and beautiful. Thus Edward Everett, at the conclusion of an essay on comets, having awakened a great interest in the subject, and described glowingly the beauties and sublimity of the starry heavens, suddenly makes the following address to one then visible :

“Return, thou mysterious traveller, to the depths of the heavens, never again to be seen by the eyes of men now living! Thou hast run thy race with glory ; millions of eyes have gazed upon thee with wonder ; but they shall never look upon thee again. Since thy last appearance in these lower skies, empires, languages, and races of men have passed away. \* \* \* Haply when, wheeling up again from the celestial abysses, thou art once more seen by the dwellers on earth, the languages we speak shall also be forgotten, and *science shall have fled* to the uttermost corners of the earth. But even there His hand, that now marks out thy wondrous circuit, shall still guide thy course, and then as now *Hesper will smile* at thy approach, and *Arcturus, with his sons, rejoice* at thy coming.”

The student will observe that the passages italicized in the above indicate also Personifications of the second degree.

72. *When may this Degree be employed?*—Personification of this kind need not be confined to the sublimest subjects or to oratorical writing. It is only needful that the circumstances should render it appropriate. When Robinson Crusoe is represented as ship-



wrecked and cast on the desolate island, and as finding some money, the narrative thus proceeds:

"I smiled to myself at the sight of this money. 'Oh, drug!' I exclaimed, 'what art thou good for? Thou art not worth to me, no, not the taking off the ground; one of these knives is worth all this heap; I have no manner of use for thee; e'en remain where thou art, and go to the bottom, as a creature not worth saving.'"

This is natural and impressive.

73. *How much Used.*—It would be easy to fill this volume with beautiful specimens of Personification. Especially does it abound in poetry. It is also often found in oratory. Yet many eminent orators never use what we call Personification of the third degree, and you may read hundreds of volumes in prose without a single example. Many elegant speakers have never employed it once.

How sublime is Milton's oft-quoted address to Light!

"Hail! holy Light, offspring of Heaven, first-born,  
Or of the Eternal, co-eternal beam,  
May I express thee unblamed—since God is light,  
And never but in unapproachèd light  
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt thou in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright essence increate?"

Not less sublime is Byron's address to the Ocean, beginning thus:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll!  
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain:  
Man marks the earth with ruin; his control  
Stops with thy shore; upon the watery plain  
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain  
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,  
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,  
He sinks into thy depths, with bubbling groan,  
Without a grave, unknellèd, uncoffined, and unknown."

Oftentimes thus by personification much thought and instruction can be conveyed, under the guise of referring to the qualities and circumstances of the object addressed. Thus Shakspeare says to Sleep:

“ Oh, thou dull god! Why liest thou with the vile,  
In loathsome beds, and leavest the kingly couch  
A watch-case, or a common 'larum-bell?  
Wilt thou, upon the high and giddy mast,  
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains  
In cradle of the rude, imperious surge? \* \* \*  
Canst thou, oh, partial sleep! give thy repose  
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude,  
And, in the calmest and the stillest night,  
With all appliances and means to boot,  
Deny it to a king? Then, happy, low, lie down,  
Uneasy is that head that wears a crown.”

This figure is often used in Wit and Burlesque.

74. *Directions on Use of Personification.*

(1.) Personification of the higher degrees should be used sparingly, or the style will appear too artistic to please the taste.

(2.) The occasion should always justify its use.

(3.) Let it not be dwelt upon too long, and the idea of personality be carried out so far as to weary or displease the hearer.

75. *Prosopopœia*.—Personification is sometimes termed Prosopopœia, but, strictly speaking, Prosopopœia is more general, and includes all kinds of speaking in which the speaker represents for the time either a personified thing or a person absent or deceased. It therefore includes both Personification and Apostrophe, which is more fully explained in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER X.

## A P O S T R O P H E .

76. *Definition, and Examples.*—A sudden turning away from the current of thought to address another person or party, or an absent or deceased person as though present and alive, is called Apostrophe.

This figure of speech is often combined or associated with Personification. It exhibits intense feeling, and, if the occasion justifies it, is impressive and efficient.

The following, from a prize essay on Education by Dr. Hamilton, is a specimen of an impressive style, and contains an Apostrophe:

“The nature of man is the shoal on which all infidel philosophy, and, if it can be, all infidel benevolence, are wrecked. These can not explain him. They mark contrasts in him which they can not reconcile. The great and the little, the strong and the weak, the divine and the infernal, they can not adjust. His origin they can not deduce. His recovery they can not meditate. They may explore all secrets, and master all difficulties but this. Christianity alone makes it plain. Man is great, but fallen; is strong, but sinning; is divine, but debased: therefore is he spiritually little, weak, infernal. It brings him back to spiritual greatness, strength, and divinity. It shows him all that he was, is, and shall be. It explains the intermediate stages and processes. It accounts for all. *Man! taught by this religion, I can abhor thee, dread thee, reverence thee, bemoan thee, shun thee, flee thee! But oh, fearful, mysterious being, I can not slight thee!*”\*

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\* The Institutions of Popular Education. An Essay to which the Manchester Prize was adjudged. By the Rev. Richard Winter Hamilton, D.D., LL.D. (London, 1845), p. 84.

All can see that turning from the descriptive current of thought to address man, adds great energy to the passage.

The following characteristic quotation from Carlyle's Essay on Sir Walter Scott exhibits the same figure :

"To omit mere prurient susceptivities that rest on vacuum, look at poor Byron, who really had much substance in him. Sitting there in his self-exile, with a proud heart striving to persuade itself that it despises the entire created universe ; and far off, in foggy Babylon, let any pitifullest whipster draw pen on him, your proud Byron writhes in torture, as if the pitiful whipster were a magician, or his pen a galvanic wire struck into Byron's spinal marrow ! Lamentable, despicable, one had rather be a kitten and cry mew ! Oh, son of Adam, great or little, according as thou art lovable, those thou livest with will love thee !"

This is a figure frequently employed by Carlyle in his disjointed, jerking style. Take another specimen from the same essay :

"The most famed man, round whom all the world rapturously huzzahs and venerates, as if his like were not, is the same man whom all the world was wont to jostle into the kennels ; not a changed man, but in every fibre of him the same man. Foolish world ! what went ye out to see ? A tankard scoured bright ! And do there not lie, of the self-same pewter, whole barrowfuls of tankards, though by worse fortune all in the same state ?"

The frequency with which this figure is employed in impassioned oratory will justify the presentation of other illustrations of it. Edward Everett, in a eulogy pronounced on La Fayette, introduces the following apostrophes :

"You have now assembled within these sacred walls to perform the last duties of respect and love, on the birthday of your benefactor, beneath that roof which has resounded of old with the master-voices of American renown. Listen, Americans, to the lessons which

seem borne to us on the very air we breathe, while we perform these dutiful rites. Ye winds, that wafted the Pilgrims to the land of promise, fan in their children's hearts the love of freedom! Blood, which our father's shed, cry from the ground! Echoing arches of this renowned hall, whisper back the voices of other days! Glorious Washington, break the long silence of that votive canvas: speak, speak, marble lips, teach us the love of liberty protected by law."

Nothing but intense feeling in the speaker, shared by the audience, would justify such an appeal, not surpassed by any thing in ancient or modern oratory; but the occasion did justify it, and when Everett uttered those words, the audience, swayed by his power, seemed, while in perfect silence they followed the gesture of the orator, and gazed first upon the portrait and then upon the statue of Washington, to expect every instant to hear the canvas or the marble speak!

77. *Remarks by Everett upon Apostrophe.*—Some excellent remarks upon this figure of Rhetoric are given by Edward Everett in his review of the speeches of Webster.\* Speaking of an orator, he says:

"In those portions of his discourse which are purely didactic or narrative, he will not be apt to rise—he will not have occasion to rise—above his notes, though even here new facts, illustrations, and suggestions will spring up before him as he moves on. But when the topic rises, and the strain becomes loftier and bolder, the thick-coming fancies can not be repelled; the whole storehouse of the memory is unlocked, its most hidden shrines fly open—all that has been seen, heard, read, felt, returns in most vivid colors—the cold and premeditated text will no longer suffice for the glow-

\* See North American Review, vol. xli. pp. 231-251.

ing thought—the stately-balanced phrase gives place to some fresh and graphic expression that rushes unbidden to the lips—the unforeseen locality or incident furnishes an apt and speaking image—and the whole discourse, by a kind of unconscious instinct, transposes itself into a kind of higher key. As the best illustration of our remark, and proof of its justice, we subjoin one of the most eloquent passages that ever dropped from the lips of man, the address [by Daniel Webster] to the survivors of the battle of Bunker Hill, and the *apostrophe* to Warren. Those were topics of course too obvious and essential, in an address on laying the corner-stone of the monument, to have been omitted in the orator's notes. But the man who supposes that the apostrophe to Warren was elaborated in the closet and committed to memory, may know a great deal about contingent remainders, but his heart must be as dry and hard as a remainder biscuit. He knows nothing of eloquence, or the philosophy of the human mind. We quote it, the rather because in the slight grammatical inaccuracy, produced by passing from the third person to the second in the same sentence, we perceive at once one of the most natural consequences, and a most unequivocal proof of the want of premeditation. When the sentence commenced, 'But—ah! him,' it was evidently in the mind of the orator to close it by saying, 'how shall I commemorate him?' But in the progress of the sentence, forgetful, unconscious of the words, but glowing and melting with the thought; beholding, as he stood near the spot where the hero fell, his beloved and beauti-

ful image rising up from beneath the sod 'with the rose of heaven upon his cheek and the fire of liberty in his eye'—'the blood of his gallant heart still pouring from his wound'—he no longer can speak *of* him; he must speak *to* him. The ghost of Samuel did not more distinctly rise before Saul than the image of Warren stood forth to the mental perception of the orator. He no longer attempts to tell his audience what Warren was, but passing from the third person to the second, he can only say, 'How shall I struggle with the emotions that stifle the utterance of *thy* name!' The sorriest pedant alone would have turned away from that touching appeal to Warren himself, present, visible to the mind's eye, on the spot where he fell, because he had commenced the sentence in the third person. But we quote the whole passage:

"'But, alas, you are not all here! Time and the sword have thinned your ranks. Prescott, Putnam, Stark, Brooks, Read, Pomeroy, Bridge! Our eyes seek for you in vain amid this broken band. You are gathered to your fathers, and live only to your country, in her grateful remembrance and your own bright example. But let us not too much grieve that you have met the common fate of men. You lived at least long enough to know that your work had been nobly and successfully accomplished. You lived to see your country's independence established, and to sheathe your swords from war. On the light of liberty, you saw arise the light of peace, like

" " " Another morn  
Risen on mid-noon ;' "

and the sky on which you closed your eye was cloudless.

“But—ah! Him! the first great martyr in this great cause! Him, the premature victim of his own self-devoting heart! Him, the head of our councils, and the destined leader of our military bands; whom nothing brought hither but the unquenchable fire of his own spirit! Him, cut off by Providence in the hour of overwhelming anxiety and thick gloom; falling ere he saw the star of his country rise; pouring out his generous blood like water before he knew whether it would fertilize a land of freedom or of bondage! How shall I struggle with the emotions that stifle the utterance of thy name! Our poor work may perish, but thine shall endure! This monument may moulder away; the solid ground it rests upon may sink down to a level with the sea; but thy memory shall not fail! Wheresoever among men a heart shall be found that beats to the transports of patriotism and liberty, its aspirations shall be to claim kindred with thy spirit!”

78. *When it should be Employed.*—Apostrophe is seldom appropriate except in impassioned oratory and poetry. It should be used sparingly and with discrimination.



## CHAPTER XI.

## SERMOCINATIO, OR DIALOGUE.

79. *Definition, and Examples.*—A FANCIED dialogue carried on in the midst of a speech or other production was called by the Greek rhetoricians simply a *Dialogue*, and by the Latins *Sermocinatio*.\*

We have no single English word to describe this common figure of speech, which is simply an imagined conversation. It may be carried on with a personified object, with a person absent or deceased, or with some person in the audience who is fancied to converse with the speaker.

Thus Edward Everett, in a speech upon the Bunker Hill Monument, fancies an objector arguing against it. We punctuate the extract so as to show the dialogue clearly, italicizing what the objector says:

"But I am met with the objection, *What good will the monument do?* \* \* \* Does a railroad or a canal do good? 'Yes.'—And how?—*It facilitates intercourse, opens markets, and increases the wealth of*

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\* "Ac sunt quidam, qui has demum *προσωποποιίας* dicant, in quibus et corpora et verba fingimus; sermones hominum assimilatos dicere *διαλογους* malunt, quod Latinorum quidam dixerunt, *sermocinationem*."

"But some—who call the figure *proσωποποιία* when we imagine both the person and the speech—prefer to call imagined speeches dialogues, which the Latins denominate *sermocinatio*" (Quintilian, lib. ix. 2, 31).

*the country.*—But what is this good for?—*‘Why, individuals prosper and get rich.’*—And what good does that do? [Here the dialogue ends.] I should insult this audience by attempting to prove that a rich man, as such, is neither better nor happier than a poor one. [Here it is resumed.] *‘But as men grow rich, they live better!’*—Is there any good in this stopping here?—*‘But these improvements increase the population.’*—And what good does that do?”

A speech is very much enlivened by this figure. The conversation must be natural, and well represented in the voice and manner of the speaker. It adds much to the effect if the author represents the character of the person correctly whom he thus summons up before him. If the fancied person is a philosopher, he must talk like a philosopher; if a clown, like a clown. The audience will be displeased if any unfairness is shown. A “man of straw,” or personage representing baseless objections, must not be called up.

We often meet this figure in sermons, especially in the form of supposing some auditor to object to the speaker, or to converse with him. The following is a specimen, slightly abbreviated, from the sermons of John Wesley: “I ask, What can make a wicked man happy? You answer, *‘He has gained the whole world.’*—We allow it; and what does this imply?—*‘He has gained all that gratifies the senses.’*—True; but can eating and drinking make a man happy? This is too coarse food for an immortal spirit.—*‘He has another resource—applause, glory. And will not this make him happy?’*—It will not; for he can not be applauded by all men; no man ever was. It is certain some will blame, and he that is fond of applause will feel more

pain from the censure of the one, than pleasure from the praise of many."

80. *Use of this Figure.*—To excel in the use of this figure, requires great skill and mental culture. The principles and directions given in the chapter on Representative Writing are nearly all applicable to it, and should be carefully studied.

## CHAPTER XII.

## VISION.

81. *Definition, and Examples.*—THE representation of what is past, future, or absent, or of a fancied occurrence, as though it was present, is properly called Vision.

Under the influence of a vivid imagination a speaker fancies what he is describing as now passing before him; and if he can succeed in producing the same temporary illusion in his hearers, the impression made by his description is much stronger than it would otherwise be.

In the description of a murder, Daniel Webster employed this figure in a passage of great power. After using the simple narrative style in the beginning of the description, as though the event had long since happened, stating that the "*deed was executed with self-possession*;" "*deep sleep had fallen on the victim*;" "*his sleep was sweet*," etc., he immediately changes his narrative into the present tense, as though the thing was happening *now*, in the presence of the judge and jury, and says:

"The assassin *enters*, through the window already prepared, into an unoccupied apartment. With noiseless foot he paces the lonely hall, half lighted by the moon; he *winds* up the ascent of the stairs, and *reaches* the door of the chamber."

After using the present tense for a few minutes, he returns to the narrative style, and says:

"The room *was* unconsciously open to the admission of light. The face of the innocent sleeper *was* turned from the murderer," etc.

Then he resumes the vision :

"The fatal blow *is* given ! and the victim passes, without a struggle or motion, from the repose of sleep to the repose of death !"

How much more impressive is this than the cold narrative style !

Frequent transitions from the past to the present are common in excited narrative, as the nature of the events described often require the narrative style, and will not admit of being represented in Vision.

In the well-known description of the battle of Waterloo by Byron, this figure is introduced with great effect. We have room only for a few lines of it. It will be perceived that it begins in the historical style, but the last line of the first stanza employs the figure of Vision.

"There was a sound of revelry by night,  
And Belgium's capital had gathered there  
Her beauty and her chivalry ; and bright  
The lamps shone over fair women and brave men ;  
A thousand hearts beat happily ; and when  
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,  
Soft eyes looked love to eyes that spoke again,  
And all went merry as a marriage bell ;—  
*But hush ! hark ! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell.*"

The next stanza describes the consternation of the company, in Vision, as though present, and then the past returns to the narrative style, and does not resume the present tense again in the whole description

till the very last, when, in describing the field *after* the battle, he abruptly brings it before us as though we could *see* it, saying:

“The earth is covered thick with other clay,  
Which her own clay *shall* cover, heaped and pent,  
Rider and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent!”

Such a production shows us the power of this figure of speech.

82. *The Historical Present*.—So common is it in historical writings, that the use of the present tense of verbs for the past tense is by some grammarians called “the historical present.” Modern writers do not use it so frequently as the ancient writers. It should be employed *sparingly*, and only in excited narratives, or it will soon lose all its effect.

To show its frequency and power, we briefly refer to a few examples.

Everett, in an oration on the Pilgrims, has a very eloquent passage, beginning with these words:

“Methinks I see it now: that one solitary adventurous vessel, the Mayflower of a forlorn hope, freighted with the prospects of a future state, and bound across the unknown sea.”

The whole passage is one of the sublimest descriptions in the English language. At the close of it the student will observe also an excellent specimen of the apostrophe, beginning:

“Tell me, man of military science! in how many months *were* they all swept off by the thirty savage tribes enumerated within the early limits of New England? Tell me, politician! how long *did* the shadow of a colony, on which your conventions and treaties had not smiled, languish on the distant coast?”

The use of the past tense of the verbs here—"were" and "did"—introduces another illusion, as though the New England Pilgrims had not succeeded, and could not have succeeded, while the hearer, knowing that they did succeed, has therefore an exalted conception of their merit. By such indirect means can a skillful master of thought and speech like Everett impress other minds.

A spirited narrative, when Vision is employed, must naturally and gracefully change from the past to the present. Sometimes the nature of the events allows it to be abrupt, thus:

"Sophia had just gone to bed, and I had thrown off half my clothes, when a cry of Fire! Fire! roused us from our calm content; and in five minutes the whole ship was in flames!—Down with the boats! where is Sophia? Here. The children? Here.—A rope to the side.—Give her to me, says one.—I'll take her, says the captain.—Throw the gunpowder overboard.—It can not be got at; it is in the magazine close to the fire.—Water! water! Push off! push off!"

A similar style is often employed by Dickens in his liveliest narrative. Thus, in describing the disembarking of himself and family from a *diligence*, or stage-coach, in Italy, he writes:

"The door is opened. Breathless expectation. The lady of the family gets out. Ah, sweet lady! Beautiful lady! The sister of the lady of the family gets out. Great Heaven, ma'amselle is charming! First little boy gets out. Ah, what a beautiful little boy! First little girl gets out. Oh, but this is an enchanting child! Second little girl gets out," etc.

83. *Prophetic Vision*.—The future also is sometimes represented as present. This is a higher flight of the imagination, as it presupposes that the speaker has, or

professes to have, power to foresee what is yet unknown to all but himself. Unless he has succeeded in obtaining the confidence of his hearers, his efforts will awaken only contempt; but if he has their respect, and has control of their feelings, he may, by the use of this figure, produce a strong impression. Thus Fisher Ames, depicting the dangers of a threatened war with the Indians, exclaimed:

"I can fancy that I listen to the yells of savage vengeance and the shrieks of torture; already they seem to sigh in the western wind; already they mingle with every echo from the mountains."

84. *Further Examples of Vision.*—Description of absent objects or of fancy scenes as present, is not uncommon, and often enlivens oratory. As a specimen, take the following from a discourse by Rev. Dr. Hopkins:\*

"See the eagle as he leaves his perch. He flaps his broad wing, and moves heavily. Slowly he lifts himself above the horizon till the inspiration of a freer air quickens him. Now there is new lightning in his eye, and new strength in his pinions. See—how he mounts! Now he is midway in the heavens. Higher he rises—still higher. Now his broad circles are narrowing to a point—he is fading away in the deep blue. Now he is but a speck. Now he is gone."

Often thus an object is fancied to be present, and described for illustration. Thus:

"What manner of plant shall this be? See—here is a point of green just visible. Look again. It has become a violet, with its eye on the sun," etc.

85. *Conclusion.*—When this figure is employed it

\* A Baccalaureate Sermon, delivered at Williamstown, Mass., August 1, 1858, by Mark Hopkins, D.D., President of Williams College.



should be well done. The descriptions must be spirited and accurate. Unimportant particulars or features must not be mentioned. The description must not be long, or it will become wearisome, and the figure must not be employed often, or it will displease and disgust the hearers.

#### EXERCISES IN FIGURES.

Point out and name the various figures in the following extracts :

“Her voice is but the shadow of a sound.”

“Destruction and Death say, We have heard the fame thereof with our ears.”

“The astronomer turns his glass to the heavens, and fixes three little points of the comet’s course, and so finds a small arc of its curve. From that arc he can predict the whole. And so from what we have done yesterday, the day before yesterday, and to-day, perhaps our life-path may be settled.”

“We are riparian proprietors, dwelling on a little bit of the shore, and looking out on a small portion of the sea which bathes all continents.”

“The gift of speech is to all men common, to man peculiar, proving that man is of one-blood, between whom and the very highest of the manco-cerebral mammalia a *great gulf is fixed*” (Allusion, Metaphor).

“The historical critic who can postpone the Bible to Manetho surely *puts himself out of court* on purely literary ground.”

“Our conscience is the Lydian stone by which we must try the gold of truth.”

“For thy sake, Tobacco, I  
Would do any thing but die!”

“Each cloud-capped mountain is a holy altar,  
An organ breathes in every grove ;  
And the full heart’s a Psalter,  
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love.”

“Steam has married the continents.”

"Even the instrument of murder is altered—the stiletto has sunk into a pen! Blood is vulgar! Stab not the body, but ruin the character!"

"I would not dissuade a student from metaphysical inquiry; on the contrary, I would endeavor to promote the desire of entering upon such subjects; but I would forewarn him, when he endeavors to look down his own throat with a candle in his hand, to take care that he does not set his head on fire."

"I can seem to see, as that hard and dark season was passing away, a diminished procession of these Pilgrims following another, dearly loved and newly dead, to that bank of graves. In full view the Mayflower is riding at anchor. The tones of the venerated elder's voice is full of trust. 'This spot,' he says, 'is now dear to us, and grows dearer daily, from the precious dust committed to its bosom.'"

"Far along,  
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,  
Leaps the live thunder."

"Though the blood of a Wallace had failed to purchase freedom for his country; though the short-lived flame which burst from the enthusiasm of Cromwell had only darkened the succeeding night; though the vices of a Stuart had produced, like the pestilential soil of Egypt, swarms of devouring locusts, gilded with titles of nobility, the battles of Saratoga, Monmouth, and Yorktown proclaimed, 'All men are born equal.'"

"You fly to arms; Indignation flashes from each eye; Revenge gnashes her iron teeth; hovering Furies darken all the air."

"The leopard can not change his spots, but we are to transform ourselves, body and soul, to save our property and lives!" (Allusion, Comparison, Irony).

"The Church of God advances unhurt amid rocks and dungeons; she has entered Italy, and appears before the walls of the Eternal City; idolatry falls prostrate at her approach; her ensign floats in triumph over the capital; she has placed upon her brow the diadem of the Cæsars."

"We charge him with having broken his coronation-oath, and we are told that he kept his marriage-vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates, and the defense is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him!"

"Born into the world in ignorance, man is impelled by an imperious instinct to know. 'Seek,' whispers a voice in his soul, 'and

thou shalt find.' He seeks, he observes, he inquires. He ascends the mountain of knowledge—rugged, precipitous; he climbs with difficulty from crag to crag; on the topmost peak, in the clear evening of an intellectual life, he beholds not the sterile boundaries of a universe explored, but an ocean of knowledge yet to be traversed, a Pacific of truth stretching on and on into the deeps of eternity."

"Mind, the angel of the universe, ready to soar out of the mists of earth, prunes her wings for everlasting flight. The instinct which forbids her to close her pinions and to die has been voracious for time, and is justly trusted for eternity."

"The flower that is out of reach is dedicated to God!"

"Who does not despise a silver-slippered religion?"

"In spurring the ardor of youth to studious exertion, it is common to repeat the Homeric maxim, 'To supplant every one else, and stand out first.' The stimulating effect is undoubted; it is strong rhetorical brandy."

"Parting day

Dies like a dolphin, when each pang imbues

With a new color as it gasps away,

The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone—and all is gray."

BYRON.

"No other language [than the Greek] has lived so long and died so hard, pang by pang, each with a dolphin color."—MRS. BROWNING.

"The attempt of infidelity to do away with the great doctrines of religion, is the prowess of a dwarf mounting on a giant's shoulders to put out his eye."

"If the spirits of the illustrious dead participate in the cares of those dear to them in this transitory life, oh, ever dear and venerated shade of my father, look down with scrutiny upon your son!"

"A man of capacity undeveloped is an organized day-dream with a skin on it."

## CHAPTER XIII.

## WIT.

86. *Definition.*—WIT brings together thoughts in unexpected associations, which awaken a peculiar feeling of pleasure, called the emotion of the ludicrous.

87. *The Philosophy of Wit.*—There is a proper order of the parts composing any material structure, and there are certain reasonable and correct associations of thoughts and feelings. The gratification awakened by perceiving any such symmetry is philosophical and perfect. A well-formed human body, an exact sphere or square, or other material form, an accurately-adjusted system of machinery, all gratify the eye; and so a well-conducted argumentation, a methodically-arranged treatise, or poem, or oration, or even a nicely-rounded period, or a thought in any way properly-expressed, pleases the mind. The reason is pleased with order.

It might be supposed, from this fact, that all incongruous associations, or associations impossible in fact, would pain the mind. So they do all minds (if any such there are) incapable of appreciating Wit.

There is sometimes in disorder a strange, fantastic regularity which pleases; sometimes the unexpected association of ideas flatters our own self-esteem; some-

times it awakens an admiration of the author of the wit; sometimes it even startlingly suggests a new truth; and in some or all of these ways it produces a peculiar pleasure that renders Wit a very efficient weapon in the hands of a speaker or writer.

Thus the picture of a symmetrical human body gratifies us; but let an artist give to the picture of a human face asinine ears, or a dog's nose, or any other distortion, and so far from the disgust that philosophy might have anticipated, a strange pleasure is excited. This is the foundation of the whole system of caricaturing. Gestures, manner, sentiments, thoughts, can all be caricatured. It can be so done as to suggest other thought, and become thus a difficult and a refined art. If it is done improperly, unjustly, it offends our sense of propriety and right, and the pleasure that would be produced by the wit is annihilated, or overpowered by indignation.

88. *Difficulty of illustrating Wit.*—Witticisms generally owe much of their effect to the occasion which produces them, and therefore, like volatile vapors, when we attempt to analyze them they evaporate. The glow-worm ceases to shine when subjected to dissection. Still we subjoin a few to illustrate the theory.

89. *Examples.*—A physician was summoned in great haste, in a dark and stormy night, to visit a patient greatly alarmed at a sudden accident. On arriving, and finding the man more frightened than hurt, he turned to his attendant and requested him to run with great haste and get a certain medicine. "I

hope," stammered the patient, "that there is no immediate danger?" "Indeed there is," said the doctor; "unless he returns as soon as he can, you will be wholly well before the medicine comes!" The incongruity consists in offering as a reason what resembles a reason in form, but if really so considered would excite only contempt.

"Can you read Greek," inquired a gentleman of one who was getting decidedly the better of him in a theological argument. "I do not know," he replied, "I have never tried."

Sir Boyle Roche said, "No man can be in two places at once *except he be a bird*."

90. *Paronomasia*.—Wit may be divided into various kinds. The most common species of Wit, and the lowest in merit, is Paronomasia, or the Pun, which consists in the use of a word or expression which will bear two meanings, in such a manner as to suggest both meanings at once, when the incongruity of the two ideas produces an emotion of the ludicrous.

Thus Curran was walking with a friend who was punctilious in the use of language. Hearing a person say "curosimy" for curiosity, he exclaimed, "How that man *murders* the language!" "Not quite *murders*," replied Curran, "he only knocks an *i* (eye) out." The two meanings of the word pronounced *i*, and the fanciful connection of knocking an eye out with murder, constituted the expression a kind of double pun, and made the reply truly witty.

Puns abound in all languages. Many persons obtain a great reputation for wits, founded only on the

frequent use of them. Humorous poetry overflows with them. The writings of Hood, Lamb, Saxe, Holmes, and many others abound in them.

Sometimes they seem wrought out and gathered together so as to present the form of a labored treatment of a subject. The following specimen of a "Catechism on Geology" illustrates this practice:

"What is geology? The science of breaking stones. Where are its professors most numerous? In State-prison. What is a geologist's capital? A pocket full of rocks. What kind of stone has been most sought for? The philosopher's stone. Has it ever been found? Yes; frequently. Where? In a hat. From what does it proceed? Quartz. Where does granite lie? In beds. What is a stratum? A layer of any thing. Can you mention any? Yes; a hen. Mention another. A ship; she lays to (too). What is a flint? A miser's heart. Can you break it? Yes. How? Open his chest. What is chalk? The milk of human kindness."

91. *Sparingly used in sober Productions.*—Puns are sometimes used sparingly in dignified writings.

Thus, in a labored article on Christian doctrine, we meet the expression: "To the average apprehension, all misty schism is mysticism." So Landor, speaking of obstinate men, says: "Stiff necks are diseased ones." One of the best puns of this character in the language is seen in a letter addressed by Franklin in July, 1775, to a member of the British Parliament who opposed the Americans. It was not intended to excite laughter, or the emotion of the ludicrous, but in a respectful, and yet severe way, to express opinions, and may be regarded as illustrating sarcasm, which is a species of wit. It was as follows:

"MR. STRAHAN,—You are a member of Parliament, and one of the majority which has doomed my country to destruction. You have

begun to burn our towns and murder our people. Look upon your hands! They are stained with the blood of your relations! You and I were long friends. You are now my enemy—and I am.

“*Yours,*

B. FRANKLIN.”

The double meaning of “yours” will be immediately perceived.

92. *A Characteristic Definition.*—The pun has been characteristically defined and illustrated as follows:

“A pun’s a word that’s played upon,  
And has a double *sense*;  
But when I say a double *sense*,  
I don’t mean double *cents*.

“As thus: A bat about a room  
Not long ago I knew  
To *fly*; he caught a *fly*, and then  
Flew up the chimney *flue*.”

93. *Puns suggesting two Languages.*—Sometimes very interesting puns are made by the combination of two languages. Words are used in the form of quotations, or as original expressions from the other language, which either sound like words in our own language that convey, in the sentence used, a ludicrous meaning, or when translated present a pun. Such instances of *Paronomasia* are, of course, few, but often to those who understand them are very pleasing. Thus Sheridan suggested to an ignorant and wealthy tobaccoist the following motto to be blazoned on his carriage: *Quid rides!* In English, “Quid” (a tobacco quid) rides,” in Latin it means “Why do you laugh?” So when a noted manufacturer of scales used for weighing desired to obtain a suitable motto to inscribe upon them, one suggested a quotation from the description of the leviathan in the Book of Job—



"His *scales* are his pride!" but another more wittily suggested the following Latin motto, "*Monstrat viam*;" literally, "It shows the way" (*weigh*).

Sometimes this kind of wit is used in a familiar style to enforce thought, as in the following:

"Never waste arguments on people who do not know logic from logwood, which is the case with half the folks who like disputation. The best reply to a stolid dogmatist is to say, 'Certainly, no doubt of it, it is as clear as mud.' Let the wrangler have his way. Leave him to himself, and he will leave you."

94. *Connected with Sarcasm*.—Puns are frequently used to give point to repartees, apothegms, and epigrams. Thus, one Ward, a flippant Parliamentary orator who used to write out and commit to memory bombastic speeches, having severely criticised Rogers's poem entitled "Italy," the poet took his revenge in writing these few lines, which were soon widely quoted:

"Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it:  
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it!"

Such puns are used to give pungency to the expression of thought. Thus: "England is a brilliant performer, but bad timist;" in which musical terms are used to illustrate the author's idea of England in its treatment of other nations. Such a pun is similar to a trope.

95. *Puns usually Untranslatable*.—A pun, from the nature of the case, often can not be translated into another language. Witticisms are often untranslatable. This may be illustrated by the effort of Edouard Laboulaye, a French author, to relate the saying of

Franklin to his associates upon signing the Declaration of Independence. He says, as literally translated from the French, "When they began to sign, one of those who were about to affix their names turned to Franklin and said: 'Well, with this the English Government can have us all hung together!' 'Why,' said Franklin, 'we can be hung separately.'"

There is neither wit nor sense in the above, showing that Laboulaye did not understand the pun. What Franklin did actually say was characteristically witty. Hancock of Massachusetts remarked: "We must be unanimous; there must be no pulling different ways; we must all *hang together*." "Yes," replied Franklin, "we must indeed all *hang together*, or most assuredly we shall all *hang separately*." The two meanings of *hang* are now very clear, and both the wit and the logic of the philosopher's remark are very evident.

96. *Connected with Proverbs and Epigrams.*—Many proverbs owe their force principally to this kind of wit. The following familiar versification of a common proverb by Dr. Doddridge illustrates this fact:

"*'Live while you live,'* the epicure would say,  
And seize the pleasures of the present day:  
*'Live while you live,'* the sacred preacher cries,  
And give to God each moment as it flies:  
Lord, in my view let both united be:  
I live to pleasure when I live to thee."

## CHAPTER XIV:

WIT—*Continued.*

97. *Wit in Thought.*—WIT of the highest kind is exhibited without any play upon words, but by presenting incongruous and yet fantastically arranged thoughts.

98. *Travesty.*—Travesty, one species of witty productions, consists in representing something as much more valuable than it really is, and thus ironically ridiculing it.

“As Berecynthia, while her offspring vie  
In homage to the mother of the sky,  
Surveys around her in the blest abode  
A hundred sons, and every son a god;  
Not with less glory mighty Dullness crowned,  
Shall take through Grub Street her accustomed round,  
And her Parnassus, glancing o'er at once,  
Behold her hundred sons, and each a dunce.”

Travesty is generally secured by debasing comparisons, though they may not be formally made.

99. *Parody.*—It is also presented sometimes in Parody, which is a composition similar in sound to another, and yet conveying an entirely different meaning. Parodies are not necessarily witty, though they generally are ludicrous on account of the associations connected with the production parodied.

Thus a writer, enumerating "the miseries of life," describes one as follows: "To climb into a berth in a river steam-boat knowing that, sleepy as you are, you may look forward to listening to the tramping of that crazy race on deck over your head, who look at views, within an inch or two of your nose, for the rest of the moonlight night.

"He thought, as he hollowed his narrow bed,  
And punched up his meagre pillow,  
How the foe and the stranger should tread o'er his head,  
As he sped on his way o'er the billow.'"

This verse is a parody on a stanza in that beautiful poem written on the burial of Sir John Moore:

"We thought, as we hallowed his narrow bed,  
And smoothed down his lowly pillow,  
That the foe and the stranger would tread o'er his head,  
And we, far away o'er the billow."

100. *Burlesque*.—Burlesque consists in using high-sounding epithets and an apparently dignified style to describe unworthy objects. Burlesque translations of the Iliad of Homer, and other celebrated compositions, have been written often with a purpose to ridicule some men or measures.

Burke, speaking of the revolutionists of his time, who made a great noise and effected but little, said:

"Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, while thousands of great cattle repose in the shade and are silent, pray do not suppose that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; or that, after all, they are other than the little meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour."

The writings of Pope present many instances of the burlesque, as the following:

“Then flashed the lurid lightning from her eyes,  
And screams of horror rend the affrighted skies;  
Not louder shrieks to pitying Heaven are cast  
When husbands and when lapdogs breathe their last.”

101. *Resources of Wit*.—Wit uses irony, caricature, hyperbole, and extravagance of every kind.

As a specimen of extravagance, take the following description of a Yankee written by an American poet:

“He would kiss a queen till he’d raise a blister,  
With his arm round her neck and his old felt hat on;  
Salute a king with the title of mister,  
And ask him the price of the throne he sat on.”

The wit of the following is very evident: Voltaire once praised a celebrated author to a third person. “It is very strange,” was the reply, “that you think so well of him, for he says you are a charlatan.” “Ah!” replied Voltaire; “perhaps we are both mistaken!”

102. *Humor*.—Humor is a mild and quiet kind of wit, associated with good-temper, and designed to convey thought in an agreeable way. A humorous writer often enlivens his descriptions with a joke, or a strange association of ideas. Sometimes the whole subject is presented in a ludicrous manner. Its nature can only be appreciated by reading the productions of such writers as Addison, Sydney Smith, Lamb, Hood, Irving and Holmes.

103. *Sarcasm*.—Sarcasm is wit that also expresses contempt and scorn.

104. *Satires*.—Satires are productions in which follies and vices are ridiculed, sometimes humorously and with good-nature, sometimes severely and indig-

nantly, often employing the bitterest sarcasm. Since the days of Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, this has been a common form of writing. Satires may be written in poetry or prose, and satirical passages are met in orations, sermons, essays, reviews, and even historical writings.

105. *Wit that does not tend to awaken Laughter.*—

Wit is often properly used to increase an interest in the subject treated; and to ridicule error, by showing its absurd consequences, and by ludicrous analogies and comparisons, and there is much wit that does not tend to produce laughter. The following illustrates this kind of wit.

The eloquent preacher Summerfield, in an address, said :

“A boasting infidel once wrote, in closing an assault upon the Bible: ‘I have gone through the Bible as a man would go through the woods felling trees; here they lie, and the priests, if they can, may replant them. They may stick them in the ground, but they will never grow.’ ‘Sir’ [said Summerfield], ‘the priests are not such fools as to suppose that sticking the dissevered limbs of a tree into the ground will make them grow, although we have inspired authority for saying, There is hope of a tree, even if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branches thereof shall not cease. But, sir, did he cut down all the trees? No, sir. There was *one* tree that he never touched; and I would to God that he *had* touched it, for it would have given a new and nobler impulse to all his efforts. I mean the *Tree of Life*, which is in the midst of the garden.’”

None can fail to feel the power of the wit in the above, but few would feel moved to laughter by it. A grateful and happy surprise is the emotion awakened by such wit.

In the use of this kind of wit Lord Bacon excelled.

Macaulay says of him :\* "In wit, if by wit he meant the power of perceiving analogies between things which appear to have nothing in common, he never had an equal—not even Cowley—not even the author of *Hudibras*." And yet, we may add, perhaps not a single expression that would excite laughter can be found in all his writings, except some witticisms quoted from the ancients, and one very poor pun quoted from Erasmus.†

106. *Absence of Witticisms in some, and its Value.*—No witticisms are found in the orations of Daniel Webster or in those of Edward Everett, though occasionally a very subdued humor and sarcasm appears. This is true of many eminent authors.

The frequent use of wit rather weakens the reputation of a writer or speaker for sobriety of character and sound judgment; and yet, where it is entirely lacking, it is felt that a great element of power is wanting. Professor Goldwin Smith has well said: "Mirth is a real part of our moral nature, significant as well as the rest. The great ministers of pure and genial mirth, Cervantes, Shakspeare, Molière, have fulfilled a moral mission of mercy and justice, as well as of pleasure to mankind, and have their place of honor in history with the other great benefactors of the race. And, on the other hand, the attempts to expel mirth

\* Macaulay's *Miscellaneous Writings*, article Bacon, p. 285.

† "Then did Erasmus take occasion to make the scoffing echo: *Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone*, and the echo answered 'One.' This may be imitated in English thus: "I have spent ten years in reading Cicero's writings—a ponderous mass, and the echo answered 'Ass.'"

from human life and character made by certain austere sects have resulted not only in moroseness, but in actual depravity."

107. *Is Ridicule the Test of Truth?* — It has been claimed that "Ridicule is the test of truth." The only proper signification of this assertion would be that whatever is true will not excite mirthful emotion, and therefore can not be made to appear ridiculous. If truth means simply fact, this can not be maintained, for some *facts* are themselves ludicrous. A pompous man, in the midst of a great display, meets with a sudden accident, and the laughter of spectators is excited. The simple narrative of the fact is witty. But if by truth is meant philosophical or moral truth, it may be claimed that it is not ridiculous, and whatever appears so can not be true. But no truth is incapable of perversion. The Bible may be slightly caricatured and made to appear ridiculous. Respect for parents, or any other good characteristic, may be presented in a ridiculous light. Ridicule is not therefore practically a test of truth.

Ridicule, like logic or rhetoric, may be perverted to advocate error.

108. *Directions upon its Employment.* — In the necessary division of labor that prevails in civilized society, there will be many who, from constitution or choice, will cultivate principally wit. Such persons should avoid its improper use. They should cherish a tender regard for the feelings of others, and satirize only falsehood and folly, and should avoid all coarseness and irreverence, to which professed wits are liable.



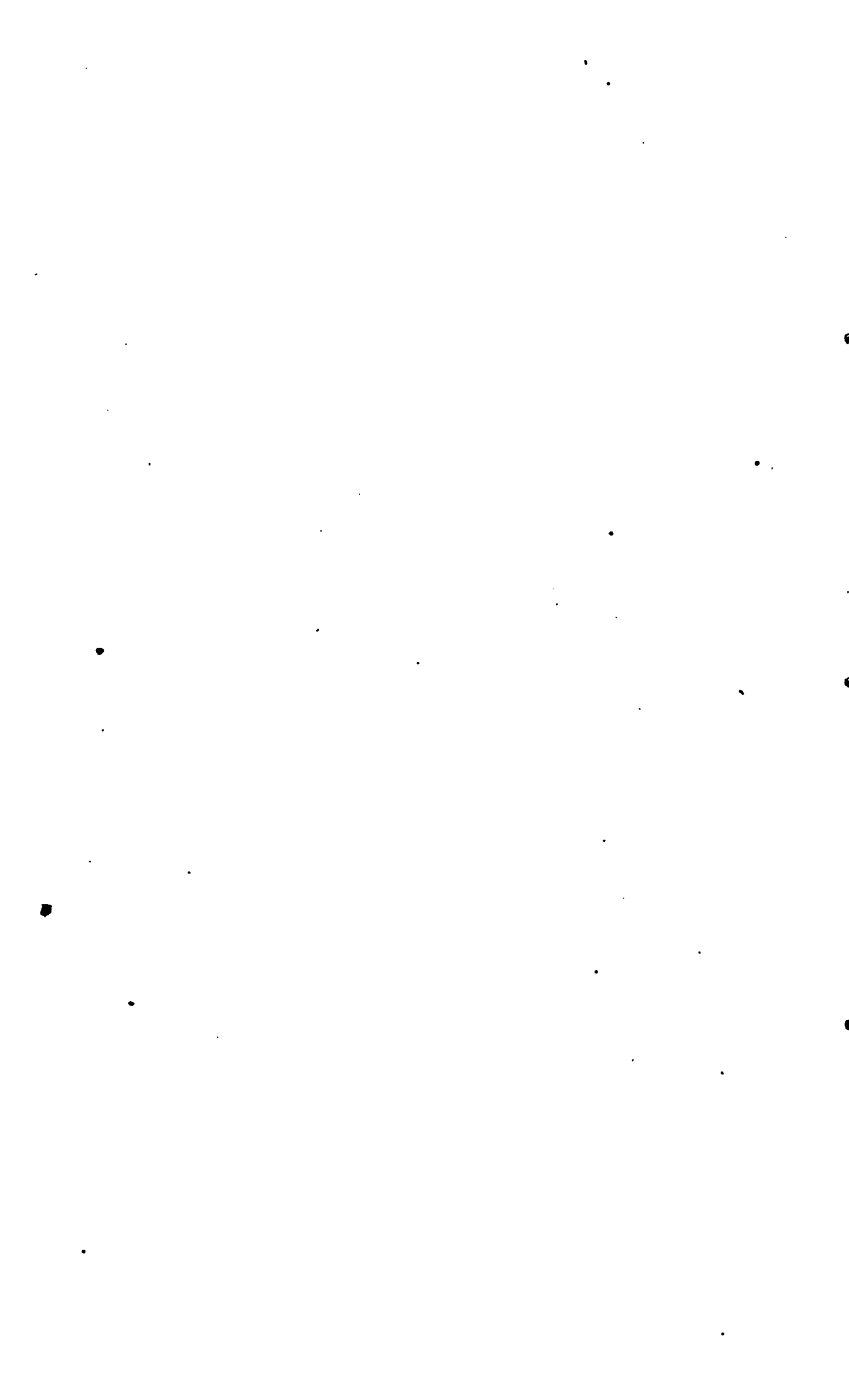
There are many who have no ambition to be regarded as wits, who nevertheless wish to use properly and with discrimination so effective a weapon. They remember that the greatest philosophers have not been destitute of it.

Let such persons read the best productions, study the best specimens, and acquire as extensive a stock of knowledge as possible, and the material will not be wanting when occasion calls for its use.

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**PART III.**  
**COMPOSITION AND STYLE.**

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## CHAPTER I.

## COMBINATIONS OF WORDS.

1. *The Grouping of Words.*—WORDS, to affect their purpose, must be grouped together according to the laws of language. As the twenty-six letters of the alphabet are capable of forming hundreds of thousands of distinct words, so the thirty or forty thousand words of our language may be arranged into millions of different combinations, each conveying a different thought. The flexibility and resources of the language of a cultivated people are incomprehensible.

2. *Natural Limit to the Vocabulary.*—There is a limit beyond which the multiplication of *words* would cease to contribute to the efficiency of a language. There is a sense in which thoughts are compound, and require to be expressed by compound words. The common classifications of words represent orders and classes of objects, qualities, motions, processes, causes and effects in the outward world, and thoughts, feelings, experiences in the soul of man. There must therefore be classes of words, to correspond with the actual classes of objects and actions.

3. *General Grammar.*—There is a kind of general grammar common to all languages. Every human being of fair mental ability is able to learn any lan-

guage, and will be aided to do so by a familiarity with his mother-tongue. All languages are transcripts of the human mind. They resemble each other like photographs of the same object taken in different degrees of light, and from different points of view.

4. *Comparative Importance of Words.*—Whether *nouns* or *verbs* are the more important, it may be impossible to decide. The primitive language probably had a few of both, or it may be that the first few utterances of man combined the nature of both nouns and verbs.

It is possible that single utterances, made by one impulse of the voice, expressed each a proposition, such as, *The sun shines, The wind blows, The apple is ripe.* If it was so, a gradual improvement in discrimination must have led to the confining of those terms, sooner or later, to a representation either of the objects, or of the assertions made, and other terms were added to express the whole thought. Thus the primitive words being few, may have been broken up, so to speak, into many, or have gained in distinctness what they lost in comprehensiveness. This process is now common, especially when a rude people are rapidly civilized, and endeavor to express their new thoughts by modifying their old language.

5. *Change in the Comprehension of Words.*—One of the most common changes now going on in language is seen in the restriction of words to narrower meanings. Thus *meat* once meant all kinds of food; soldier once meant any person hired (from *soldatus*); now it means one employed, or even volunteering, for mili-

tary service; *minister* once meant any servant, now it is, at least in popular language, confined to that class of men who consent to serve their fellow-men as preachers of the Gospel, and have made their service an honorable profession, or to describe ambassadors sent to represent a nation before a foreign Government. The exactly opposite process of extending the comprehension of words, so as to embrace more objects, does also sometimes take place. Thus *flesh* once signified only pork; *bread* is sometimes used to mean all kinds of *food*, as in the petition, "Give us our daily *bread*."

6. *Compound Words*.—Words are often compounded, or combined, to express compound objects, as thoughts suggested by two or more causes. Thus steam and boat are combined to produce steam-boat. A compound word ought to denote one idea, different from that which would be expressed by the parts taken separately.

The English language is comparatively poor in native compound words, and this is undoubtedly one of its most serious defects. Many words that are really compound in other languages are transferred to our language as simple words, and thus the people are compelled to learn many more independent words than those who speak languages which have fewer primitive and more compound terms.

Such words as *thunder-storm*, *thunder-cloud*, *witchcraft*, *earthquake*, *axe-handle*, *snow-plow*, *engine-tender*, *color-bearer*, *seven-shooter*, *apple-parer*, need no explanation. Is it not a pity that we have sacrificed such

words as *earth-tylth* (earth-tillage), *hand-cloth*, and others, that made the mother Anglo-Saxon so much more vigorous than the daughter English? It may yet become fashionable to reinstate many old compound words now forgotten.

## CHAPTER II.

## PROPOSITIONS.

7. *Definition, and Examples.*—ANY collection of words making complete sense is a Proposition. A Proposition in the English language may consist of only one or two words, and it may cover several pages. Instances :

“Grass grows.”

“Every thing about him, his coat, his wig, his figure, his face, his scrofula, his St. Vitus’s dance, his rolling walk, his blinking eye, the outward signs which too clearly marked his approbation of his dinner, his insatiable appetite for fish-sauce and veal-pie with plums, his inextinguishable thirst for tea, his trick of touching the posts as he walked, his mysterious practice of treasuring up scraps of orange-peel, his morning slumbers, his midnight disputations, his contortions, his mutterings, his gruntings, his vigorous, acute, and ready eloquence, his sarcastic wit, his vehemence, his insolence, his fits of tempestuous rage, his queer inmates (old Mr. Levett and blind Mrs. Williams, the cat Hodge, and the negro Frank), all are as familiar to us as the objects by which we have been surrounded from childhood.”

8. *The Elements of a Proposition.*—To every Proposition there are three parts: the subject treated of; the assertive word or words; and the copula which connects the two together. Sometimes the copula has no separate word, but it is expressed by a peculiar form of the verb, or assertive word, and in some languages a single word often embraces all the three



elements of the Proposition. Thus, *I am cold*, is a proposition having the three separate parts. *Rain falls* is a proposition in which *rain* is the subject, *falls* is the assertive word in its true form, and the *s* added serves as a copula to connect the two.

9. *The Order of the Terms of a Proposition.*—The natural order of the words in a proposition in our language is, first, the subject; second, the predicate, including the copula; or second, the copula; and third, the predicate. *Man strives*, is a proposition in which *man* is the subject, *strives* is the predicate and copula together. The word *striving* would express the predicate alone, and *is* would form the copula, thus: *Man is striving*.

*There lives a man*, is another form of the proposition *A man lives*.

In some instances the natural order of words in a proposition may be changed. "He loves my friend," "Loves he my friend," "My friend he loves," all may express the same thought.

10. *Variety of Construction.*—There must be one best order of words for every one shade of thought. There is a slight difference between the meaning of "a broad and deep sea," and "a sea deep and broad." In the former we have to retain in the mind the ideas of the qualities "broad" and "deep" until we hear the word "sea," and then we connect them. In the latter, "sea" gives us at once a conception of a *thing*, and as soon as we hear the word "deep" we join it to the conception "sea," and then add the further qualification "deep." When several adjectives are

used belonging to one noun, it is frequently best to employ them after the noun. It is well so to use words that each succeeding clause, and, as far as possible, each succeeding word, may give an additional thought to the hearer.

11. *A Variety to be Studied.*—It is idle to maintain that any one of the forms of sentences that express various shades of meaning is the best, or most to be cultivated. In some languages, in the use of a transitive verb with both subject and object, it is customary to present the object first, in others the subject first, and sometimes the verb is presented first. We can in our own language say, *Nature man admires*; but generally, to avoid ambiguity, we are compelled to preserve what from habit seems to us to be the natural order, thus: *Man admires nature*. But when any other arrangement of the parts of a proposition can be made without rendering the proposition ambiguous, or meaningless, often vivacity and energy may be thus secured. Thus: "Loud arose the shout above the hum of business, and immediately hushed was every breath," is much more expressive than "The loud shout arose above the hum of business, and every breath was hushed immediately." The superior energy of the former expression arises partly from its novelty or unusual form, and partly from the interest excited at once by the word "loud." Other instances are the following: "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" "Turn we now to the holier impulses of our being." This last proposition may be expressed variously: "Now we turn to the holier impulses

of our being ;" "Now turn we to the holier impulses of our being ;" "To the holier impulses of our being now we turn."

It is evident that even in the English language simple propositions will admit of a great variety in the arrangement of their words.

12. *Place of Adjectives, Adverbs, and other Words.*—The natural order in our language is for the adjective to precede the noun the signification of which it limits ; but, for variety and vivacity, this order may often be varied. "The reports of the guns, loud, sharp, constant, produced a startling effect."

Adverbs should generally be placed immediately before or after the words which they limit, but may sometimes be placed at a great distance from them, and thus become more emphatic. Thus we may say, "Slowly he trudged along, singing, amid all his toil and care, merrily."

In the use of qualifying words, clauses, and phrases, an author may show great skill, both in securing a variety of expressions, and in adapting his style to the character of the thought which he intends to express.

It becomes a disagreeable mannerism when an author deviates constantly, in one particular way, from the ordinary method of arranging words.

13. *A Variety of Construction to be Sought.*—It is an excellent practical exercise to select some expressive sentence from a good author, and ascertain, by actual trial, in how many different ways the same words may be arranged without materially changing the mean-

ing. Then let the words and expressions be changed, still preserving the sense. Then let all the forms be scrutinized, and the different degrees of force and beauty be noticed. In this way a writer will guard against monotony or uniformity of method in constructing sentences, and cultivate a variety of expressions.

Take, for instance, the following simple statement of Webster :

“When public bodies are to be addressed on momentous occasions, when great interests are at stake, and strong passions excited, nothing is valuable in speech farther than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments.”

This may be rendered :

“When great interests are at stake, and strong passions are excited, and public bodies are to be addressed, nothing in speech is farther valuable than it is connected with high moral and intellectual endowments.”

Or it might be :

“When strong passions are excited, and great interests are at stake, and public bodies are to be addressed on momentous occasions, nothing in speech, farther than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments, is valuable.”

Many other forms could be constructed, but none fully equal to the original. In that the attention is first called to a demand for good speaking, which is evidently the leading idea; then we have an idea of “momentous occasions,” generally expressed, confirmed by “great interests are at stake;” still farther, by “strong passions are excited;” then we have a very general conclusion, “nothing is valuable in speech,” immediately limited by “farther than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments.”

Some sentences are so neatly expressed that the change of a single word would injure them. Take the following from Edward Everett as an instance:

“On one occasion a person introduced himself in the following manner: ‘You see before you a father who has educated his son agreeably to the principles in your *Emile*.’ Rousseau’s reply was, ‘So much the worse for you and your son!’”

14. *Practical Directions*.—Elementary treatises on grammar may be studied with great profit to ascertain the best directions for the location of adverbs, adjectives, the infinitive mode, and other elements of speech, but a careful writer will need only to observe that perspicuity and force are primarily to be secured, and that a variety in the construction of sentences should be sought.

Also guard against a useless expenditure of breath—a superabundance of vocables. Scattering shot do little execution.

## CHAPTER III.

## SENTENCES.

15. *Definition, and Examples.*—SENTENCES may be simple or compound. A simple sentence has but one subject, and one finite verb. Instances :

“Man is mortal.”

“To an American visiting Europe, the long voyage he has to make is an excellent preparative.”

A compound sentence has more than one finite verb, and is capable of being divided into two or more propositions.

Sentences differ much in length. “Beauty is vain,” is a short sentence.

The following is longer :

“Our immense extent of fertile territory opening an inexhaustible field for successful enterprise, thus assuring to industry a certain reward for its labors, and preserving the lands for centuries to come from the manifold evils of an overcrowded, and consequently degraded population ; our magnificent system of federated republics, carrying out and applying the principles of representative democracy to an extent never hoped or imagined in the boldest theories of the old speculative republican philosophers, the Harringtons, Sydneys, and Lockes of former times ; the reaction of over-political system upon our social and domestic concerns, bringing the influence of popular feeling and public opinion to bear upon all the affairs of life in a degree hitherto wholly unprecedented ; the unconstrained range of freedom of opinion, of speech, and of the press, and the habitual and daring exercise of that liberty upon the highest subjects ; the absence of all serious inequality of fortune and rank in the con-

dition of our citizens ; our divisions into innumerable religious sects, and the consequent co-existence, never before regarded as possible, of intense religious zeal with a degree of toleration in feeling and perfect equality of rights ; our intimate connection with that elder world beyond the Atlantic, communicating to us, through the press and emigration, much of good and much of evil not our own, high science, refined art, and the best knowledge of old experience, as well as prejudices and luxuries, vices and crimes, such as could not have been expected to spring up in our soil for ages ; all these, combined with numerous other peculiarities in the institutions, and in the moral, civil, and social condition of the American people, have given to our society, through all its relations, a character exclusively its own."

16. *Variety of Taste on this Subject.*—Some vigorous and clear writers confine themselves almost entirely to short sentences. Writings of a didactic character sometimes consist of a succession of independent propositions naturally expressed in short sentences. Some writers present us with an almost unbroken succession of long sentences. Either practice as a fixed habit is reprehensible. A continued succession of either short or long sentences wearies the hearer or reader.

Short sentences are more forcible and lively, but weary the ear and mind by monotony, unless relieved by the occasional interposition of a long sentence. Long sentences require a more constant attention, and, however well constructed and expressive, soon cease to charm, unless the attention is relieved by shorter expressions.

It is evident that he who never constructs a long sentence can not reach a great height in eloquence, though indeed often the strongest emotions and the most heart-stirring appeals are couched in simple language and short sentences.

. The thrilling description of a murder given by

Webster in one of his pleas as a lawyer is a good illustration of the power of short sentences. We present a brief extract to illustrate this fact:

“Deep sleep had fallen on the destined victim, and on all beneath his roof. A healthful old man, to whom sleep was sweet, the first sound slumbers of the night held him in their soft but strong embrace. The assassin enters, through the window already prepared, into an unoccupied apartment. With noiseless foot he paces the lonely hall, half lighted by the moon; he winds up the ascent of the stairs, and reaches the door of the chamber. Of this he moves the lock, by soft and continued pressure, till it turns on its hinges; and he enters, and beholds his victim before him. The room was uncommonly open to the admission of light. The face of the innocent sleeper was turned from the murderer; and the beams of the moon, resting on the gray locks of his aged temple, showed him where to strike. The fatal blow is given! and the victim passes, without a struggle or motion, from the repose of sleep to the repose of death!”

In the whole of the plea from which the above is taken, occupying hours in its delivery, not a single long sentence is found. On the other hand, some of the most splendid orations of ancient and modern times abound in long sentences. It requires a highly-cultivated mind to construct a long sentence full of thought, containing no superfluous parts, and so arranged as to interest the mind and not offend the ear.



## CHAPTER IV.

## LOOSE SENTENCES AND PERIODS.

SENTENCES may be farther divided into Loose Sentences and Periods.

17. *Loose Sentences.*—A loose sentence consists of parts which may be separated from each other without destroying the sense. Sometimes the latter part will make complete sense alone, and sometimes it is necessary to repeat a few words found in the former part.

## EXAMPLES. .

"It seems, gentlemen, that this is an age of reason ; the time and the person have at last arrived that are to dissipate the errors of past ages."

A full pause could be made after "reason," the following word could begin with a capital letter, and no change would be made in the sense. The whole is therefore a loose sentence.

"He aspired to be the highest ; above the people ; above the authorities ; above the laws ; above his country."

The above sentence could close with either of the words, "highest," "people," "authorities," or "laws," and make complete sense. It is therefore a loose sentence.

Loose sentences are often divided by the writer into their primitive parts, and punctuated as separate sentences; and, on the other hand, some writers so punctuate their writings as to appear to write very long sentences, which are really only a union of short ones.

Occasionally a few connecting words are omitted, so that it is possible to unite short sentences together into one long and loose sentence. The following from Bancroft's "History of the United States" illustrates this practice. By the insertion of a few words in brackets, we show how it might have been cut up into several short sentences:

"And man, the occupant of the soil, was wild as the savage scene: [He was] in harmony with the rude nature by which he was surrounded: [He was] a vagrant over the continent, in constant warfare with his fellow-man; strings of shells [were] his ornament, his record, and his coin; the bark of the birch [was] his canoe; the roots of the forest [were] among his resources for food; his knowledge in architecture [was] surpassed both in strength and durability by the skill of the beaver; bended saplings [were] the beams of his house; the branches and rind of trees [were] its roof; drifts of forest-leaves [were] his couch; mats of bulrushes [were] his protection against the winter's cold; his religion [was] the adoration of nature; his morals [were] the promptings of undisciplined instinct: [He was] disputing with the wolves and bears the lordship of the soil, and dividing with the squirrel the wild fruits with which the universal woodlands abounded."

Thus it is seen that the above sentence consists of at least fourteen parts, at the end of each of which the sense is complete, and each of which, by the addition of a word or two to supply the place or the punctuation, would make sense by itself.

Many writers who abound in long sentences, use

only loose sentences, and might punctuate their writings so as to seem to use only short sentences.

There is a great variety of forms in which loose sentences may be constructed, which the careful student of Rhetoric in his general reading ought to observe.

18. *Periods*.—A Period is a compound sentence not making full sense till closed.

#### EXAMPLES.

“Favored child of an age of trial and struggle, carefully nursed through a period of hardship and anxiety, endowed at that time by the oblations of men like Harvard, sustained from its first foundation by the paternal arm of the commonwealth, by a constant succession of munificent bequests, and by the prayers of all good men, the University at Cambridge now invites our homage, as the most ancient, the most interesting, and the most important seat of learning in the land.”

The following sentence from the writings of Richard Hooker, a celebrated divine of the 16th century, is a good specimen of a period :

“Now, if Nature should intermit her course, and leave altogether, though it were but for a while, the observation of her own laws ; if those principal and mother elements of the world, whereof all things in this lower world are made, should lose the qualities which now they have ; if the frame of that heavenly arch erected over our heads should loosen and dissolve itself ; if celestial spheres should forget their wonted motions, and by irregular volubility turn themselves any way as it might happen ; if the prince of the lights of heaven which now as a giant doth run his unwearied course, should, as it were, through a languishing faintness, begin to stand and to rest himself ; if the moon should wander from her beaten way, the times and seasons of the year blend themselves by disordered and confused mixtures, the winds breathe out their last gasp, the clouds yield no rain, the earth be defeated of heavenly influence, the fruits of the earth pine away as children at the withered breasts of their mothers no longer able to yield them relief : what would become of man himself, whom these things now do all serve ?”

19. *Value of Periods.*—Great orators have produced their sublimest impression by the use of the period. Let no student suppose that he can command thoughts worthy of such a dress without much study, or clothe his worthy thoughts in such a stately garb without much careful practice. Lord Brougham, one of the most successful orators of modern times, states that he composed the peroration of a certain speech “twenty times over at least, and it certainly succeeded in a very extraordinary degree.” To show what kind of sentences were the result of so much labor, we give the peroration to which he referred—the close of his speech in behalf of Queen Caroline:

“My lords, I pray you to pause. I do earnestly beseech you to take heed! You are standing upon the brink of a precipice—then beware! It will go forth your judgment, if sentence shall go against the queen. But it will be the only judgment you ever pronounced which, instead of reaching its object, will return and bound back upon those who give it. Save the country, my lords, from the horrors of this catastrophe. Save yourselves from this peril; rescue that country, of which you are the ornaments, but in which you can flourish no longer, when severed from the people, than the blossom when cut off from the roots and the stem of the tree. Save that country, that you may continue to adorn it. Save the Crown, which is in jeopardy—the Aristocracy, which is shaken. Save the Altar, which must stagger with the blow that rends its kindred throne! You have said, my lords, you have willed—the Church and the king have willed—that the queen should be deprived of its solemn service. She has, instead of that solemnity, the heartfelt prayers of the people. She wants no prayers of mine. But I do here pour forth my humble supplications at the Throne of Mercy, that that mercy may be poured down upon the people in a larger measure than the merits of its rulers may deserve, and that your hearts may be turned to justice.”

It will be observed that it consists of a succession of short sentences, with an occasional longer and loose sentence.

20. *The most emphatic Words and Thoughts should be placed at the close.*—In a well-constructed period, not only is the sense incomplete till the last clause is pronounced, but the most emphatic and important thought is in the last expression.

We subjoin an eloquent period from the eulogy of Rufus Choate upon Daniel Webster:

“And yet, if on some day, as that season” [his college life] “was drawing to its close, it had been foretold to him that before his life, prolonged to little more than three-score years and ten, should end, he should see that country, in which he was coming to act his part, expanded across a continent; the thirteen States of 1801 multiplied to thirty-one; the territory of the North-west and the great valley between sown full of those stars of empire; the Mississippi forded, and the Sabine and Rio Grande, and the Nueces; the ponderous gates of the Rocky Mountains opened to shut no more; the great tranquil sea become our sea; her area seven times larger, her people five times more in number; that through all experiences of trial, the madness of party, the injustice of foreign powers, the vast enlargement of her borders, the antagonisms of interior interest and feeling, the spirit of nationality would grow stronger still and more plastic; that the tide of American feeling would run even fuller; that her agriculture would grow more scientific; her arts more various and instructive, and better rewarded; her commerce winged to a wider and still wider flight; that the part she would play in human affairs would grow nobler ever, and more recognized; that in this vast growth of national greatness time would be found for the higher necessities of the soul; that her popular and her higher education would go on advancing; that her charities and all her enterprises of philanthropy would go on enlarging; that her age of lettered glory should find its auspicious dawn—and then it had been also foretold him that even so, with her growth and strength, should his fame grow, and be established and cherished, there where she should garner up his heart; that, by long gradations of service and labor, he should rise to be, before he should taste of death, of the peerless among her great ones; that he should win the double honor, and wear the double wreath of professional and public supremacy; that he should become her wisest to counsel and her most eloquent to persuade; that he should come to be called the Defender of the Constitution, and the preserver of honorable peace; that the ‘austere glory of suffering’ to save the Union should

be his ; that his death, at the summit of greatness, on the verge of a ripe and venerable age, should be distinguished less by the flags at half-mast on ocean and lake, less by the minute-gun, less by the public procession and the appointed eulogy, than by sudden paleness overspreading all faces, by gushing tears, by sorrow, thoughtful, bod- ing, silent, the sense of desolateness, as if renown and grace were dead—as if the hunter's path, and the sailors, in the great solitude of wilderness or sea, henceforward were more lonely or less safe than before—had this prediction been whispered, how calmly had that perfect sobriety of mind put it all aside as a pernicious or idle dream !”

## CHAPTER V.

INTERROGATIONS, EXCLAMATIONS, CLIMAX, REPE-  
TITION.

21. *Interrogations.*—THE prime design of a question is to ask for information ; but as a question naturally arrests the attention as if to demand a reply, it is often resorted to in excited feeling to express an assertion, by assuming that no other reply could be given than the one which the speaker believes to be correct. Therefore in oratory the question is often used with great effect.

This figure is so natural and so common that we need not illustrate it largely. We subjoin a few specimens culled at random from good authors :

“ Can gray hairs render folly venerable ? ”

“ Is the world to gaze in admiration on this fine spectacle of virtue ; and are we to be told that the Being who gave such faculties to one of his children, and provides the theatre for their exercise, that the Being who called this moral scene into existence, and gave it all its beauties, is to be forgotten and neglected, as of no consequence ? ”

“ Is talent or genius confined to the rich or powerful ; or is it conferred indiscriminately on poor and rich, on weak and powerful ? ”

“ He clothes the lily ; feeds the dove,  
The meanest insect feels his care  
And shall not man confess his love ?—  
Man, his offspring, and his heir ! ”

A great part of the speaking and writing of earn-

est men is in the form of interrogatory. He who does not occasionally use it, even when expecting no reply, has reason to suspect that his feelings never rise above a dead level of placid contentment. The only caution needed upon the subject is to avoid so frequent or constant a use of this form of speech as justly to expose one to a charge of mannerism.

22. *Exclamations*.—Exclamations are similar to interrogations, and sometimes can scarcely be distinguished from them.

“And may the disciples of Washington thus see, as we now see, the flag of the Union floating on the top of the Capitol; and then, as now, may the sun in his course visit no land more free, more happy, more lovely than this our own country!”

“Oh that I possessed the talent of eulogy, and that I might be permitted to indulge the tenderness of friendship in paying the last tribute to his memory! Oh that I were capable of placing this great man before you!”

23. *Interjections*.—The frequent use of interjections, such as oh! ah! alas! give an appearance of affectation and frigidity to style, and should be avoided.

24. *Climax*.—In the arrangement of thoughts and expressions, a peculiar force is commanded by securing a gradual increase of interest to the last. Let the feeblest expression come first, the strongest last. Such an arrangement is called a Climax.

Something like a gradual increase of assertion appears in the following sentence from Bancroft:

“The unparalleled persecution of vast masses of men for their religious creed occasioned but a new display of the power of humanity—the Calvinists preserved their faith over the ashes of their churches, and the bodies of their murdered ministers; the power of a brutal soldiery was defied by *whole companies* of faithful men that still as-



sembled to sing their psalms ; and *from the country and from the city*, from the comfortable homes of wealthy merchants, from abodes of an humble peasantry, from the workshops of artisans, hundreds of thousands of men rose up, as with one heart, to bear testimony to the indefensible, irresistible right to freedom of mind."

This sentence is pleasantly climacteric, and accomplished rhetoricians often use this style. A good period is usually a climax.

25. *Anti-climax*.—An Anti-climax is sometimes resorted to, to belittle a subject.

Hawthorne speaks of a custom, which he intended to ridicule, as "befitting the Christian, the good citizen, the horticulturist, and the gentleman." The following from Shakspeare is very beautiful :

"What must the king do now ? must he submit ?  
The king shall do it : must he be disposed ?  
The king shall be contented : must he lose  
The name of king ? let it go !  
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads ;  
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage ;  
My gay apparel for an almsman's gown ;  
My figured goblets for a dish of wood ;  
My sceptre for a palmus walking-staff ;  
My subjects for a pair of carved saints ;  
And my large kingdom for a little grave—  
*A little, little grave—an obscure grave !*"

In the use of these two forms of expression, care should be taken to avoid an appearance of art. It is the highest art to conceal art.

26. *Repetition*.—Repetition may be resorted to without tautology when the object is to deepen the impression, and the magnitude of the theme will justify it.

"He aspired to the highest ! above the people ! above the authorities ! above the laws ! above his country !"

The peculiarity of repetition is to seize upon the most prominent thought and hold the attention upon it a long time. If the attention is not wearied, the impression is greatly deepened.

Pope, to awaken compassion for the fate of an unfortunate lady, says :

“By foreign hands thy dying eyes were closed,  
By foreign hands thy decent limbs composed,  
By foreign hands thy humble grave adorned,  
By strangers honored, and by strangers mourned.”

Paul emphatically urges his argument in the form of interrogatories with repetition, thus :

“Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more.”

He adds to this still another series of climacteric repetitions, 2 Corinthians xi. 23. Observe how the impression of the value of *science* is increased by the following repetition of the word in Spencer's able work on education :

“Thus to the question with which we set out—What knowledge is of most worth?—the uniform reply is—Science. This is the verdict on all the counts. For direct self-preservation, or the maintenance of life and health, the all-important knowledge is—Science. For that indirect self-preservation which we call gaining a livelihood, the knowledge of greatest value is—Science. For the due discharge of parental functions, the proper guidance is to be found only in—Science. . For that interpretation of national life, past and present, without which the citizen can not rightly regulate his conduct, the indispensable key is—Science. Alike for the most perfect production and highest enjoyment of art in all its forms, the needful preparation is—Science. And for purposes of discipline—intellectual, moral, religious—the most efficient study is, once more, Science.”\*

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\* Education, Intellectual, Moral, and Physical, by Herbert Spencer (New York, 1861), p. 98.

It would be impossible, were the attempt made, to express all the forms in which thought and emotion may clothe themselves. Careful observation, when reading or listening to speakers, will enable the student to secure a great variety in his own expressions.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE MELODY OF SENTENCES.

27. *Rhythm*.—IN what may be called the oratorical style, a style particularly pleasing when pronounced, a peculiar balance of sentences is often preserved. Prose has its rhythm as well as poetry, only it is less restrained, less artificial, and more varied.

A rhythm is often secured by a proper admixture of long sentences and short, loose sentences and periods, interspersed with various forms of expression, such as interrogations, exclamations, repetitions, and climaxes; but also a single long sentence may have a rhythmical balance of its parts. For instance, observe the following:

“As we perceive the shadow to have moved along the dial-plate, but did not perceive it moving; and it appears that the grass has grown, though nobody ever saw it grow: so the advances we make in knowledge, as they consist of such minute steps, are only perceivable by the distance.”

“And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went up, thus he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!”

“It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”

“The ocean may roll its waves, the warring winds may join their forces, the thunder may shake the skies, and the lightnings pass swiftly from cloud to cloud; but not the forces of the elements com-

bined, not the sound of thunders, nor of many seas, though they, united in one peal, and directed to one point, can shake the security of the tomb."

28. *Advantages of Rhythm.*—Not only does the harmony of a sentence please the ear, but it commands attention, aids the memory, and deepens the impression.

It will be observed in the chapter on Antithesis, that the use of this figure of speech is almost invariably accompanied by a balance of words, corresponding with the contrasted thoughts.

"Gold can not make a man happy, nor rags render him miserable."

"We charge him with having broken his coronation-oath, and we are told that he kept his marriage vow! We accuse him of having given up his people to the merciless inflictions of the most hot-headed and hard-hearted of prelates, and the defense is, that he took his little son on his knee and kissed him!"

"The first sentence which broke the awful silence was a quotation from Rousseau: 'Socrates died like a philosopher, but Jesus Christ—like a God!' Never before did I completely understand what Demosthenes meant by laying such a stress on delivery."

29. *Rough and Smooth Sounds.*—Some writers on Rhetoric have recommended a particular attention to the degree of roughness or smoothness of the sounds of various words, and to reject words that are made up of several consonants in succession, such as *adjudged, sixth*; to avoid the immediate succession of vowels, such as in *lineal, reappear*, and to secure a happy combination of sounds. Such rules are more finical than wise. Use words to express thoughts, and pronounce them distinctly.

It may be well, however, to observe that sentences

closing with unimportant words, and particularly with a succession of unaccented syllables, such as *immobility*, *incompatibility*, are not pleasing to the ear.

Sentences that interpose expressions between a preposition and its object are often disagreeable.

"He was greatly indebted *to*, and had received many favors *from*, and finally was induced to repay, his friend," is awkward.

Better recast the sentence thus:

"He was greatly indebted to his friend, having received from him many favors, and was induced to repay him."

Sometimes qualifying phrases are inserted, as indeed single adverbs and adjectives also are, out of their proper place.

"They determined to rebel against a nation of which they constituted a part, and to which they had sworn fidelity *not only*, but also to erect a bastard republic in its place."

The "*not only*" should be before "*rebel*." Such solecisms can be tolerated occasionally, but when seemingly from a fondness for the sound a speaker has a peculiarity of this kind, it is an offensive mannerism.

30. *How far should the Sound of Sentences be regarded?*—There is a power about the mere sound of words, and when a valuable idea is clothed in a melodious expression it lingers long in the memory, and is often repeated. "The old man eloquent," "the almighty dollar," "masterly inactivity," "master of the situation," "Let us have peace," are examples. There is also such a thing as a harmony of the sound with the sense. Scorn hisses, anger jerks its words out abruptly, love chooses smooth and liquid expressions. Mo-

tion also may be imitated. This has been attempted by many in poetry.

But little attention should be given to this subject, except by the way of rejecting disagreeable combinations of sounds, especially when revising a production. It has been well remarked by John Stuart Mill, of the ancient writers, who are supposed to have been very critical :

“The ancients, in the good times of their literature, would as soon have thought of a coat in the abstract, as of style in the abstract : the merit of a style, in their eyes, was, that it exactly fitted the thought. Their first aim was, by the assiduous study of their subject, to secure to themselves thoughts worth expressing ; their next was to find words which would convey those thoughts with the utmost degree of nicety ; and only when this was made sure did they think of ornament.”\*

Whether “the ancients” did this or not, all ought to do it who seek perfection in style. Probably a larger portion of the moderns than of the ancients succeed in this effort.

31. *Is the English Language rough or smooth?*—The English language was originally rough and harsh to the ear, and the disuse of nearly all the old Anglo-Saxon variations of declension and ‘conjugation, and the razeeing of so many polysyllables down into monosyllables have, in some instances, made the enunciation still more jerking and harsh. But at the same time many guttural sounds have been dropped out, as from the words *daughter*, *laughter*, and some smooth-sounding words and terminations have been adopted from the French and other sources, so that the language now commands a great variety of roughness

\* J. Stuart Mill’s *Dissertations*, vol i. p. 137.

and smoothness. Byron, eulogizing the Italian language in a rather loose stanza, unfavorably contrasts with it the English tongue.

“I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,  
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,  
And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,  
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South;  
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,  
That not a single accent seems uncouth,  
Like our harsh Northern, whistling, grunting, guttural,  
Which we’re obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.”

On account of the prevalence of the hissing sound of *s* in our language, those who speak it have been called by foreigners a nation of serpents. This sound is much more prevalent in some speakers than in others.

The harshness of the language is alleviated by the introduction of many long and melodious words from the Latin and other languages, and our words may be combined so as to present a succession of remarkably melodious sounds; also the most of the old guttural pronunciations have been dropped.

32. *Elasticity of the English Language.*—The elasticity of the English language is great. It combines harshness, melodiousness, lassitude, and strength. Passages in it are as smooth as any in the ancient Greek or modern Italian; as majestic as any in the ancient Latin or modern Spanish; as strong as the German, as precise as the French. Still there are certain particulars in which nearly every language is superior to any other, but it may be doubted whether there is any speech, ancient or modern, which combines so many



opposite capabilities as the English. Any ambiguity in another language may be directly expressed, or paralleled, in the English, and at the same time a thought may be so definitely enunciated that none but the willfully blind or perverse can mistake it. Thought can be condensed into a few short words, or spread out over an almost interminable surface. The sublimest emotion may be uttered, and the most delicate feeling find appropriate dress.

33. *Onomatopy*.—Onomatopœia, or Onomatopy, is the name given to the figure of speech in which the sound of the word indicates either an actual sound or a motion, as *rub-a-dub-dub*, for the sound of a drum, *hiss*, *crash*, *quick*, *lazy*.

Some believe that the first words spoken were all onomatopoetic, and that gradually, on that narrow foundation, the whole superstructure of language has been built up. If so, a natural instinct is gratified by onomatopoetic expressions, and by harmonious associations of words and thought. Thus, in the description of soft plaintive music, a succession of smooth sounds, easily uttered, would charm at once the sense and the judgment. A battle, or a storm at sea, or an earthquake, would require a different dress. Perhaps every Rhetoric in the English language published since Milton wrote has had the two following examples from the *Paradise Lost*. The first describes the opening of hell's gates :

“On a sudden open fly  
With impetuous recoil, and jarring sound,  
The infernal doors ; and on their hinges grate  
Harsh thunder.”

Heaven's doors swing open more smoothly, thus :

"Heaven opened wide  
Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound,  
On golden hinges turning."

Motion also can be indicated by the sound of words.  
Pope excelled in this refinement.

"When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,  
The line too labors, and the words move slow."

Contrast this slow movement with the rapid one  
which follows :

"Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,  
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main."

That beautiful poem of Bryant, *Thanatopsis*, should  
be read aloud to exhibit its merits, not the least of  
which is the fitness of the sound to the soothing and  
triumphant hope which it expresses. Observe the  
music of the concluding lines, and its correspondence  
with the quiet close of a good life :

"So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
The innumerable caravan, that moves  
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of death ;  
Then go not like the quarry slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
By an unfaltering trust, approach the grave,  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams."

84. *Conclusion*.—It is very easy to carry attention  
to the sound of sentences to an excess. In the heat  
of composition, oral or written, it is well to give but  
little thought to it, but in revision it should not be  
wholly neglected. In this way appropriate habits  
will be formed.

## CHAPTER VII.

## STYLE.

35. *Definition.*—THE peculiar mode of expression usually employed by any person is called his style.

Styles differ as much as human countenances, so that though millions may exist at once, no two are precisely alike. Still they may be classified in a few general groups.

There are many different methods of expressing the same thought or feeling, each of which may be called a different style.

The most of authors have a style that is either natural or habitual to them, so that having read a few of their writings, you come to expect that whatever you read from them hereafter will bear a certain similarity to what you have read. Careful critics will often detect the production of a favorite author in a writing that does not bear his name. How peculiar, for instance, are the styles of Samuel Johnson, Addison, Bunyan, Dean Swift, Carlyle, Macaulay, Daniel Webster, Edward Everett, and Charles Dickens.

36. *What produces Variety?*—Peculiarities of style are the outgrowth of an author's nature, or the effect of his habits. If an author has no peculiar style, but seems to write equally well in so great a variety of

methods as to have no style of his own, he is likely to be weak in all his methods. "*Non omnes omnia possumus*"—"Every body can not do every thing." Each man should choose his weapons or his tools, and learn to work efficiently with them. Fortunate is he who chooses tools suited to his constitution and his genius. And yet it is well for a student to practice for a time many different styles.

37. *Some Varieties in Style.*—Some of the varieties of style are the following: The Saxon style, in which short words, mostly derived from the Anglo-Saxon or the mother-language, are principally employed. The Latin style, in which the long words mostly derived from the Latin language are abundant. Of course there may be an endless variety of styles on this matter alone. The abrupt style, made up entirely or principally of short sentences. The flowing style, made up of long sentences. The loose style, using only loose sentences when long ones are employed. The periodic style, abounding in periods. The dry style, which is destitute of figurative expressions, of wit, and of every thing to please the fancy or interest the mind, except the naked statement of facts and opinions. The florid style, abounding in tropes, metaphors, and other figures. There may be several subordinate styles under this head, as the tropical style, the metaphorical style, the allegorical style, the hyperbolical style, and many others. The idiomatic style, abounding in idioms, colloquialisms, and proverbial expressions. The scholastic style, in which the sentences are all artificially constructed with

great care, so as not to offend the severest grammatical rules, and in which the words are used with especial regard to their etymological meaning. The logical style, in which the author frequently argues, introducing syllogisms, or presents conclusions, preceded frequently by such words as "hence," "thence," "therefore," and "wherefore." The witty style, of which there may be many classes. In some, puns, quirks, singular combinations of words or thoughts are sought.

Various applications of any of the particular principles illustrated in the preceding part of this book will cause varieties of style.

38. *Variations in Style innumerable.*—It is unnecessary to consider all the possible styles, and every intelligent student perceives that they are innumerable and indescribable. The only practical questions worthy of consideration are: Must every style, to be commendable, embrace certain qualities? If so, what are they? What faults should be avoided? What is the best method to obtain a good style?

39. *No one Style can be pronounced best.*—It would be a serious fault in a Rhetoric to recommend any particular style as essentially the best. No teacher does so much harm, in Rhetoric or Elocution, as one who induces all his pupils to strive to adopt one particular fashion of writing or speaking. Trees may be trimmed into the same shape, but they will not remain so unless they are dead. No two leading minds in the world ever had the same method of expressing or enforcing thought.

There are certain qualities that should always be aimed at, which we will mention.

40. *Perspicuity*.—Perspicuity is an essential element of a good style.

“Thus let me drop into each author’s ear  
A piece of counsel : Keep your meaning clear,  
Your statements lucid ; for of this be sure,  
That dullness only ever is obscure.”

This has already been recommended in the examination of words.\* It should also be remembered in the construction of sentences.

41. *Should it always be particularly Sought?*—The writer may consider for whom he is writing. If for profound scholars, he need not express his thought more than once, and that in as few words as possible, and may use illustrations and allusions which to other minds would be unintelligible. If he is writing for people unfamiliar with the topic presented, he may repeat his thoughts in new words and with new illustrations, till he is sure that it is understood. Great care will be requisite to hit the happy medium between too great brevity and too great diffuseness.

It is a characteristic of the style of the best advocates and pleaders before juries, that they dwell upon and repeat their thoughts till they are sure of having made an impression. Tediousness is however to be avoided.

42. *Pre-requisite to Perspicuity*.—It is an infallible pre-requisite to perspicuity that a man should thoroughly understand and clearly perceive what he is

\* See pp. 68–70.

trying to state. Muddy thoughts naturally employ uncertain words. Therefore the profoundest thinkers, the best speakers, the ablest writers, are generally perspicuous.\*

A writer may often improve his style in this respect by reading his productions to others, and carefully noting the expressions which are misinterpreted or not understood, also by reading his own productions a long time after they were written, and by noting what appears to himself obscure.

43. *Perspicuity violated sometimes by Parentheses.*—Perspicuity is often violated by the too frequent use of parenthetical clauses or sentences, which, by diverting the attention from the main point in view, confuse and befog the hearer. Even some of the most elegant writers in the language err in this respect, arising from the fact, undoubtedly, that their productions were intended to be *read*, and not to be *spoken*. The following sentence from Thomas De Quincey, whose style has been much commended by some, is an example:

“The fact really was, that the human intellect had been for some time outgrowing its foul religions; clamorously it began to demand some change; but how little it was able to effect that change for itself, is evident from no example more than that of Plato; for he, while dismissing as fables some of the grosser monstrosities which the pagan Pantheon offered, loaded in effect that deity, whom he made a concurrent party to his own schemes for man, with vile qualities quite

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\* “The greatest thinkers and writers the world has yet seen have not been obscure; they may give some trouble sometimes, but their meaning for the most part is plain enough, and, with a little extra diligence, even their difficult passages become so” (Rev. Henry Rogers’s *Greyson Letters*, p. 571).

as degrading as any which he removed ; and in effect so much the worse, as regarded the result, because, wanting the childish monstrosities of the mythologic legends, they had no benefit from any allegoric interpretations in the background."\*

44. *Unity Defined.*—The unity of a sentence is violated in long, complicated, and confused paragraphs. Such a style is not adapted to public speaking, or to be understood from the utterance. One can only comprehend it with the book before him, allowing him frequently to review what he has read. Unity requires that a sentence should have a leading subject, around which all the subordinate parts naturally cluster, and the predicate should clearly belong to the leading subject alone. If this is violated a sentence becomes a mob without a leader, instead of an army in a stately march.

Still too much regard must not be paid to this at all times, or the sentences will have an appearance of uniformness and stiffness.

45. *Perspicuity may be Intentionally Violated.*—It has been taken for granted, in the recommendation of perspicuity, that the object of the author is to convey information ; if he has another object, his style must be adapted to accomplish his purpose. He may intend to conceal thought, or simply to pass away time, or to excite feeling, or to suggest more than he says, or to astonish by a strange use of language ; and in such productions perspicuity may be of no value, and may be even a blemish. This thought naturally suggests another element of a good style.

\* De Quincey's *Historical and Critical Essays* (Boston, 1853), vol. i. p. 195.



46. *Style should be adapted to its Purpose.*—A good style is always adapted to the purpose in view.

If an address is made to children, such language as they can be expected to appreciate is employed. To use recondite terms, long involved sentences, arguments requiring close attention and careful ratiocination, in an address to children, would be very absurd.

Witticisms in a funeral oration, short, abrupt expressions in the description of a beautiful landscape, poetical terms in a scientific treatise, quotations from the Bible in a burlesque performance, would all offend a man of good sense.

The style will correspond with the thought if the writer is a man of power and culture. When he reasons, he will use a clear, logical style; when he persuades, he will repeat and enforce his views by many illustrations, according to the abundance of his information and the vigor of his mind. Sometimes he will use many short sentences, sometimes perhaps a flowing period; sometimes he will question, sometimes command. Sometimes his connected thoughts will flow out in a stream that would, properly printed, form a paragraph covering many pages, and sometimes the thoughts will find their most adequate expressions in disconnected sentences, each a paragraph.

47. *A Variety should be sought.*—If a young writer finds himself falling into a monotonous style of expressing his thoughts, he should make assiduous efforts to break it up. The best of styles wearies us if a speaker or writer always uses the same. Even such a work as Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman

Empire" would be more interesting if its style was more varied.

On this subject Mr. Herbert Spencer has well said:

"To have a specific style is to be poor in speech. If we remember that in the far past men had only nouns and verbs to convey their ideas with, and that from then to now the growth has been toward a greater number of implements of thought, and consequently toward a greater complexity and variety in their combinations, we may infer that we are now, in our use of sentences, much what the primitive man was in his use of words; and that a continuance of the process that has hitherto gone on must produce heterogeneity in our modes of expression."

## CHAPTER VIII.

## IDIOMS AND PROVERBS.

CRITICS often characterize some particular author as employing an idiomatic style, but what is properly meant by the phrase has perhaps never been accurately defined.

48. *Definition.*—An Idiom is a collection of words justified by custom, and yet used so peculiarly that other words, meaning nearly or quite the same thing, can not with propriety be used in the same way. It is also applied to expressions in which the strict rules of general grammar are not obeyed, so that they can not be translated literally into another language and be understood. “Not at all” is an Idiom. Substitute *neither* for *not*, and the phrase “neither at all” becomes unpleasant, though perhaps in some combinations it might barely be excused. Substitute for “*all*” every one, and “not at every one” becomes absurd; nor can “not at all” be translated literally into any other language. And yet this unconstruable expression is so convenient and strong that we can *not at all* think of sparing it from our language.

49. *Every Language has peculiar Idioms.*—Every language has its own stock of idioms. The Latins, instead of saying with their own words “I have a

book," would generally have said "To me is a book" (*mihī est liber*). The Greeks, though very critical in the use of words, still allowed their best speakers to use two negatives in one expression without destroying each other, such as, "He was not able neither to speak nor to act," meaning, as we should say, "He *was* able neither to speak nor to act."

50. *Idioms abound in our ancient best Writings.*—English idioms abound in our oldest authors. We subjoin a few: "Get you gone," for "Begone, or take yourself away." "You had best," or "You were best," for "It would be best for you," as

"Answer every man directly,  
Ay, and truly, *you were best.*"

"The onset was so terrible that the soldiers could not *stand their ground*." Substitute abide for "stand," or place for "ground," and observe at once the anomaly of the expression, and yet shall "stand your ground" be banished from our language?

The "Pilgrim's Progress" contains many such idioms as "hold me to it," "be of good cheer," "all this while," "come to a point," "you lie at the catch," "let us mend our pace," etc. Montaigne says, "To *know by heart* is not to know," in which "to know by heart" means merely to have in the memory, and not to think out as an original thought. "He is an *out and out* gentleman." "I will come *by-and-by*," which used to mean *immediately*, but now means some little time hence. In Matthew xxi. 13, we read, "When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, *by-and-by* he is offended," meaning *immediately*. The

signification has degenerated to "before long." So careful a writer as Marsh, when writing on the English language, said, "The project took air," for the project became public. "Get out of the way," "Made over his property;" "He sings a good song," for he sings well, "Our debts and our sins are generally *greater than we think for*," are expressions that we cull from the classic writers of the English language. "A good character should be employed as a *means* of doing good," instead of a *mean* of doing good, though such a writer as Sir William Hamilton, and many others, have lately revived the old custom of using *mean* for *means* in similar expressions. "In our midst" is an expression justified by honorable usage, but the pruning and hypercritical spirit of modern times begins to discard it. Cowper wrote, "I *had* much rather *be* myself the slave;" and Shakspeare wrote, "Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than that Cæsar were dead, to live all freemen?" A modern American would write, "Would you rather choose that Cæsar should live, and you all die slaves, or that Cæsar should die, and you all live freemen?" But which is the more nervous? "As it were" is used for "if you will allow the expression or thought." "When saw we thee a *hungered*, and fed thee?" "*No matter* what fields are desolated, what fortresses surrendered," etc. The phrase *no matter* is an English idiom, forcible, and that can not be spared. "*Methinks* I see it now," said Everett, in introducing a vision of the Mayflower, with its cargo of Puritans, using an old Anglo-Saxon idiom, meaning something more than *I*

*think*, and similar to "it occurs to me," "it rises involuntarily to my sight." "The more he knows, the more he is desirous of knowing." "The words *took effect*." "Who is as often out in his encomiums as in his censure," says Sir William Hamilton.

Observe the idiomatic strength of the following from a justly admired passage of Milton :

"Though all the winds of doctrine were *let loose* to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we *do injuriously* by licensing and prohibiting her. Let her and Falsehood grapple. Who ever knew Truth *put to the worse* in a free and open encounter?"

Take another much-admired passage from the same author :

"*As good* almost kill a man as kill a book ; who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature—God's image ; but he who destroys a good book kills reason itself ; kills the image of God, *as it were, in the eye.*"

51. *An Idiomatic Style*.—A writer who uses freely and naturally the idioms of the English language may with propriety be termed an idiomatic writer. It will be found, however, that the oldest writers in the language use the most of them, and that as grammatical cultivation is attended to, there are more of the writers who, either from a fear of criticism or from disinclination, seldom or never use a good, strong, healthy idiom. Their expressions are toned down to such grammatical accuracy that they could be literally translated into any other language without exciting any more attention than they do in their own !

52. *Proverbs*.—But, besides idioms, there are proverbs, many of which are peculiar in style as well as in thought. A proverb is a sententious expression,

weighty in meaning, and which is frequently repeated without reference to its origin. We say an expression has "passed into a proverb," when it is often quoted as common property. Such proverbs as "Honesty is the best policy," "Live while you live," "Give an inch, and he will take an ell," "There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous," are well known. Some proverbs are recognized as vulgar, others are elevated and noble. One book in the Bible is entitled a "Book of Proverbs," and contains some which are in common use, though the verbal beauty and force of a proverb are generally destroyed by translation from one language to another. Each language has its own; there are but few common to two or more languages. Languages, like other clothes, vary in fashion. Chesterfield, who was more finical than wise, and who had not merit enough to achieve high success as an author without the peculiar advantages of his hereditary position, discountenanced the use of proverbs, simply because the uneducated use them. The fact that these repositories of thought and wit are in the possession of both the unlearned and the learned, renders them doubly valuable to one who would address a general audience in speech or writing. Such writers, as Cobbett and Benjamin Franklin never shrink from a popular idiom or proverb.

53. *New Idioms and Proverbs.*—It should not be forgotten that both new idioms and new proverbs are continually arising. A strong mind often throws out a new verbal expression of perhaps an old, perhaps a new thought, so felicitous that it is caught

up at once, and either embalmed as a proverb, or frequently employed as a new idiom. The power of originating forcible or beautiful expressions is a rare gift, and he who exercises it well is a public benefactor. Such writers as Walter Savage Landor and Ralph Waldo Emerson have thus enlarged the verbal machinery of a people. "Murder will out" is a modern proverb. "The sum of all villainies" was originated by John Wesley. What may be termed modern idioms are many of them metaphors drawn from occupations, customs, or modes of action common in these times, and, in proportion to their character and use, may be regarded as degraded or honorable. A few instances will illustrate our meaning.

So critical a writer as Thomas de Quincey, in an article on "Homer and the Homeridæ," writes: "As if it were possible that a coarse, clumsy hulk like the ship *Argo*, at which *no possible Newcastle collier but would have sneezed*, could obtain an everlasting memory in the starry heavens!"

So the Rev. F. D. Maurice, an accurate and vigorous writer, uses such expressions as, "He has not a right to say that he has found a man that will *run in the same team* with Sir William Hamilton;" "You and I are not school-men, we are roughing it in the world."

54. *How much should these Idioms and Proverbs be employed?*—The taste must not be cultivated to such a squeamishness as to sacrifice all strength of thought. Jefferson maintained that grammatical accuracy might be surrendered for independence and vigor. It can not be denied that some modern grammarians would



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vulgarity, such as to "flash in the pan," to "pull up stakes," to "fizzle out," to "cotton." The changes which gradually take place in language usually originate among those who are least trammelled by law and precedent.

56. *The indefinable idiomatic Character of every Language.*—Every language has not only a peculiar stock of idioms, but also its own peculiar way of expressing thought; wherefore to translate a forcible and *idiomatic* production into another language is very difficult. It is seldom that one man obtains an extensive command over the idioms of more than one language.

57. *Changes in Language.*—As we have shown, in our examination of words, languages are constantly changing. A writer in the Westminster Review well remarks: "Dictionaries contain only selections from the language; the number of words in them by no means rendering them worthy to be considered collections of the language. The English of grammars and schools is but a chosen portion of an existing whole. In fact, *the English language*, as learned by foreigners, is by no means *the language of England*." That is true; and still more forcibly may we say, that the English language, as learned out of a few elementary books, is not the language of the United States of America. The people of America would be no better than dead men if they did not change the language which they use. Whatever is alive grows, and throws off effete matter. A living language grows in idioms and figures, as well as in words, and discards what is useless. And yet no sooner does a vig-

refine all vigor out of speech. We can not afford to ostracize all the idioms and proverbs and nervous expressions of our mother-tongue, and we should not be shocked at new ones.

An anecdote illustrating this subject is related by Jefferson, describing the criticisms that were made on his original draft of the Declaration of Independence by the Congress of 1776, which debated three days before adopting the paper.

"I was," says Mr. Jefferson, "sitting by Dr. Franklin, who perceived that I was not insensible to the mutilations. 'I have made it a rule,' said Dr. Franklin, whenever in my power, to avoid becoming the draftsman of papers to be reviewed by a public body. I took my lesson from an incident which I will relate to you. When I was a journeyman printer, one of my companions, an apprentice hatter, having served out his time, was about to open shop for himself. His first concern was to have a handsome sign-board, with a proper inscription. He composed it in these words: "*John Thompson, hatter, makes and sells hats for ready money*," with a figure of a hat subjoined. But he thought he would submit it to his friends for their amendments. The first he showed it to thought the word *hatter* tautologous, because followed by the words *makes hats*, which showed he was a hatter. It was struck out. The next observed that the word *makes* might as well be omitted, because his customers would not care who made the hats; if good, and to their mind, they would buy. He struck it out. A third said he thought the words *for ready money* were useless, as it was not the custom of the place to sell on credit. They were parted with. The sign now stood: "*John Thompson sells hats*." "*Sells hats!*" says his next friend; "why nobody will expect you to give them away; what then is the use of that word?" It was stricken out, and then "*hats*" followed, as there was one painted on the board. So his inscription was reduced ultimately to "*John Thompson*," with the figure of a hat subjoined."

55. *Good Taste should be our Guide.*—Good taste and sound judgment will be required to teach when to use, if ever, the vigorous expressions originating among the people which for a long time wear the garb of

vulgarity, such as to "flash in the pan," to "pull up stakes," to "fizzle out," to "cotton." The changes which gradually take place in language usually originate among those who are least trammelled by law and precedent.

56. *The indefinable idiomatic Character of every Language.*—Every language has not only a peculiar stock of idioms, but also its own peculiar way of expressing thought; wherefore to translate a forcible and *idiomatic* production into another language is very difficult. It is seldom that one man obtains an extensive command over the idioms of more than one language.

57. *Changes in Language.*—As we have shown, in our examination of words, languages are constantly changing. A writer in the Westminster Review well remarks: "Dictionaries contain only selections *from* the language; the number of words in them by no means rendering them worthy to be considered collections *of* the language. The English of grammars and schools is but a chosen portion of an existing whole. In fact, *the English language*, as learned by foreigners, is by no means *the language of England*."

That is true; and still more forcibly may we say, that the English language, as learned out of a few elementary books, is not the language of the United States of America. The people of America would be no better than dead men if they did not change the language which they use. Whatever is alive grows, and throws off effete matter. A living language grows in idioms and figures, as well as in words, and discards what is useless. And yet no sooner does a vig-

orous original writer in America appear, than some foreign critics, and their American imitators, charge him with using "Americanisms;" as though it were an offense. He does use Americanisms, or he belongs to the class of imitators—always a feeble and contemptible class. The English writer should use Anglicisms, and the American writer Americanisms, and every man should speak out what is in him in a free and independent manner; thus showing that the climax of power is not yet reached, and that those who now live are not mere echo repeaters of the past, or of each other. As has been well said by Buffon:

"To write well is at once to think well, to feel rightly, and render properly; it is to have, at the same time, mind, soul, taste. Style supposes the reunion and the exercise of all the intellectual faculties. *The style is the man.*"

Such are the last words of Buffon's "Maxims." Southey speaks of the same subject in the following passage, from one of his familiar letters:

"A man with a clear head, a good heart, and an honest understanding, will always write well. It is owing either to a muddy head, an evil heart, or a sophisticated intellect that men write badly, and sin either against reason, or goodness, or sincerity. There may be secrets in painting, but there are none in style. When I have been asked the foolish question, what a young man should do who wishes to acquire a good style, my answer has been, that he should never think about it, but say what he has to say as perspicuously as he can, and as briefly as he can, and then the style will take care of itself."

The last direction is a little too sweeping for a student. Still it is true that a man can not write vigorously unless he forgets the rules of style in the fever or strong passion of composition. The time to remember the rules is when *forming habits* of style, and when criticising and amending productions after they are written.

## CHAPTER IX.

## HOW TO ACQUIRE A GOOD STYLE.

58. *General Principle.*—If a youth of ordinary intelligence were asked how in his opinion he might make himself an accomplished mechanic, or machinist, or painter, or sculptor, he would promptly answer: "By studying the science, by receiving instruction from expert practitioners, by thoroughly examining the best specimens of workmanship, and by continual careful practice." This is felt to be true, and it is only by such a process that any one can become a good speaker or writer.

Some persons have a natural fluency and ease in communicating their thoughts, both by speech and by writing. The poets Pope and Watts, and many others, wrote verses while they were yet, according to common law, to be regarded as infants. Others, who have become equally eminent afterward, wrote at first with great difficulty, and not till they had reached maturer years. The best writers and ablest speakers have devoted great labor (consciously or unconsciously) to the improvement of their style.

59. *Efforts of Gibbon to command a good Style.*—That ripe scholar and profound historian, Gibbon, the author of the "Decline and Fall of the Roman Em-

pire," details in his autobiography the care and immense study with which he formed his style; and when, in the prime of his life, he came to write the first volume of his great work, he says:

"The style of an author should be an image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect."\*

This, too, was after he was already an author of writings both in the French and English languages that had elicited commendations from the best judges. Many have written history with less care, but how few read their productions, compared with the readers of Gibbon!

60. *Example of Prescott.*—Prescott's histories have been highly eulogized as models of good style. It is instructive to learn that after he was twenty-five years old, he resumed the study of Rhetoric with assiduous perseverance, and that when he began to write for the public, he examined and re-examined his own productions with great care. Some of his earlier chapters he re-wrote several times, always striving to improve them. He says of himself, after having written several chapters of his "Ferdinand and Isabella,"

"Two or three faults of style occur to me in looking over some former compositions. Too many adjectives; too many couplets of substantives as well as adjectives, and perhaps of verbs; too set; sentences too much in the same mould; too formal periphrasis instead

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\* Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, Esq., with Memoirs of his Life and Writings.

of familiar ; sentences balanced by *ands*, *but*s, and semicolons ; too many precise, emphatic pronouns, as *these*, *those*, *which*, etc., instead of the particles *the*, *a*, etc."\*

After he had fully formed his style he became less particular. This is natural. The time to be particular is when young, and when habits and powers of perception are both forming for life.

61. *Example of De Quincey*.—De Quincey, a master of a style which has been highly eulogized, even to the last persisted in revising and even re-writing his productions with great care, before he would allow them to go before the public. Such also is the practice of Victor Hugo and many other eminent writers.

62. *Webster as an Example*.—The style of Daniel Webster was very terse and vigorous. Generally simple, but occasionally highly ornamented, and remarkable for expressing strong thought and earnest feeling in what seems the best possible manner. Mr. Webster, in a conversation with friends in his old age, while modestly lamenting his own ignorance, as it seemed to him, when he looked out upon the boundless field of thought, expressed a fear that his style would degenerate, and added :

"My style was not formed without great care, and earnest study of the best authors. I have labored hard upon it, for I early felt the importance of expression to thought. I have re-written sentence after sentence, and pondered long upon each alteration. For, depend upon it, it is with our thoughts as with our persons—their intrinsic value is mostly undervalued, unless outwardly expressed in an attractive garb. Longinus tells us that the most sublime passage to be found in any language is this in the Bible: "Let there be

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\* Life of William Hickling Prescott, by George Ticknor (Boston, 1864), p. 219.



light, and there was light :’ the greatest effort of power in the tersest and fewest words—the command and the record one exertion of thought. So should we all aim to express things in words.”\*

After such examples, it is superfluous to recommend to young writers great care and study in forming their style.

63. *A Study of good Authors recommended.*—Familiarity with the best authors is indispensable. Language and manner are largely learned by unconscious imitation. It is not well to waste time in the society of inferior writers, and listening to inferior speakers. Always choose the best you can command. Prefer the decisions of those whose position entitles them to authority, to your own. A book that pleases you much may be very faulty. The standard English and American authors should be read thoroughly. Read much, rather than many books. Discard inferior and too often illiterate newspapers, and select for your information a single newspaper of high literary merit, and spend the rest of your time devoted to reading with the best books you can command.

64. *Translations from one Language into Another.*—Frequent translation from another language, ancient or modern, into English, or the translation of choice passages in our language into some other language, and then back again into English, with a comparison of the result with the original, is a good exercise.

65. *Frequent Composition.*—Write as often as you can, and, if possible, something every day, at least ev-

\* Harper’s New Monthly Magazine (New York), vol. xiii. p. 221. The sentiment of Longinus is not quite accurately stated in the above.

ery week. Whenever an error is detected, whether from a criticism of another person or by your own increasing familiarity with language and thought, discard it, and never repeat it.

66. *Slowness and Rapidity of Composition*.—Perhaps the most valuable direction is the favorite motto of Erasmus, "*Festina lente*"—"HASTEN SLOWLY!" Write slowly at first, studiously, thoughtfully. A good student should write at least one exercise, and it would be well if he would write several exercises, on all the different kinds of composition required, for instance, in Part II. of this book. After such careful exercise it will be proper for him to write rapidly, and with little or no thought about rules of Rhetoric, and with little revision.

67. *Discard Imitation*.—Take no writer or speaker for your model. If so, you will be likely to surpass him in his faults, and fall below him in his merits. Intentionally imitate no one, except it may be for a rhetorical pastime, to see what you can do. In your genuine productions, write from your own mind and heart.

Prescott well says on this subject:

"Indeed, it is impossible to separate language from thought in that delicate blending of both which is called style; at least, it is impossible to produce the same effect with the original by any copy, however literal. We may imitate the structure of a sentence, but the ideas which gave it its peculiar propriety we can not imitate."\*

Lessing well says that "Every man should have his own style as he has his own nose."

\* Biographical and Critical Miscellanies, by William H. Prescott (Boston, 1861), p. 271.

68. *Opinion of Carlyle on the Mode of acquiring a good Style.*—Carlyle, whose style is very labored, but is very excellent, according to Coleridge's test—"untranslatableness in words of the same language, without injury to the meaning"—has given some excellent advice on rapid writing. He says:

"The adroit, sound-minded man, will endeavor to spend on each business approximately what of pains it deserves; and with a conscience void of offense will dismiss it then—And yet, on the other hand, it shall not less but more strenuously be inculcated, that in the way of writing, no great thing was ever, or will ever be done with ease, but with difficulty. Let ready writers, with any faculty in them, lay this to heart. Virgil and Tacitus, were they ready writers? The whole *Prophecies of Isaiah* are not equal in extent to this cobweb of a Review Article. Shakspeare, we may fancy, wrote with rapidity, but not till he had thought with intensity. No easy writer he, or he had never been a Shakspeare. Neither was Milton one of the mob of gentlemen that write with ease; he did not attain Shakspeare's facility, one perceives, of even writing fast *after* long preparation, but struggled while he wrote. Goethe also tells us he 'had nothing sent him in his sleep,' no page of his but he knew well how it came there. It is reckoned to be the best prose, accordingly, that has been written by any modern."\*

69. *Further Advice.*—Such also is the opinion of Brougham, and indeed of nearly if not quite all men competent to judge of the subject. Write carefully then. Remember the example of such men as Plato, whose style the ancients thought worthy to be called divine, and who, it is said, wrote the beginning of his "Republic" many times in a great variety of ways before he was satisfied, and yet the words, as they now stand, seem very simple, and their order the most natural that could be chosen. The best style is like

\* Critical and Miscellaneous Essays: collected and republished by Thomas Carlyle (Boston, 1860), vol. iv. p. 242.

the best glass, so clear as not to be noticed—but how difficult it must be to produce perfectly faultless glass!

70. *Interlineations to be Avoided.*—After, however, good habits of composition are formed, much interlineation and change of words ought, if possible, to be avoided. Writers who discipline themselves the most severely at first, generally arrive at the habit of ready, and correct, and appropriate writing. The same principles also apply to extemporaneous speaking.

71. *Earnestness Necessary.*—It should also be remembered that earnestness is a prime excellence in a speaker or writer. Though we have already quoted Carlyle in this chapter, yet his advice is so appropriate on this subject that we present it:

“Sweep away utterly all frothiness and falsehood from your heart; struggle unweariedly to acquire what is possible for every God-created man, a free, open, humble soul: *speak not at all, in any wise, till you have somewhat to speak*; care not for the *reward* of your speaking, but simply, and with undivided mind, for the *truth* of your speaking.”\*

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\* Carlyle's *Miscellanies*, vol. iii. p. 67.

## CHAPTER X.

## STYLE ADAPTED TO EXPRESS EMOTION.

72. *Nature of Emotion, and its Place in Rhetoric.*—WE have defined Rhetoric as the science and art of expressing thought and *emotion* by language in the best manner. Emotion is as essential as thought, and has its own laws, and its own modes of expression.

Mental philosophers have differed in the terms employed to describe that part of our nature exercised when we feel emotions, but all persons are conscious of the meaning of such words as *sensibility*, *appetite*, *affection*, and *desire*; nor is it necessary, for the purposes of a Rhetoric, that we should be minute in the classification of the passions.

All affection is preceded by some degree of thought.

73. *A Sense of Duty.*—The noblest affections are those growing out of the idea of duty, or the recognition of the right or wrong of some act. No man can plead with peculiar earnestness to produce conviction, unless he has not only a firm belief himself in the truth of the proposition which he is endeavoring to establish, but also that it will lead to just action, and will prevent injustice. He then becomes zealous for the right. A man may be zealous for truth alone, but it

communicates zest to his arguments and pleadings, if he believes that the establishment of the truth will lead to right action.

74. *Can one plead for a known Falsehood?*—A man can not plead for a known falsehood except hypocritically, or by producing in himself a temporary false belief. The natural indignation of the healthy mind at such a course weakens a man, and if exposed, brings upon him censure and contempt. It is the true function of Rhetoric to overcome and destroy error; and though falsehood may use it as a weapon, it is only by a perversion of its true purpose. A defender of what is believed to be truth will endeavor to expose hypocrisy or dishonesty in an opponent, and awaken in him shame and repentance, and in others toward him indignation, censure, pity, or contempt. These last passions, if persisted in, and if there is no abandonment of the wrong by its defenders, will swell into anger and hatred.

75. *All Emotions right.*—All passions are right, to a certain degree, when the occasion demands them, and the orator may properly endeavor to excite any one of them.

76. *Passions of Approval.*—There are passions of approval, as well as disapproval. Love in all its various forms must have an intellectual basis. It proceeds from thought. There is the love of man, as man; the peculiar love of the virtuous and noble; and a love of those who exhibit some good traits, such as generosity, bravery, truthfulness, patriotism, though they may be deficient in other good qualities, and even

possessors of some injurious and disagreeable traits of character. Thus the affections excited by the portraiture of character, or the description of actions, are often very complex, blending approval and disapproval, love and hatred, indignation and sympathy, execration and pity. The field, therefore, of the orator is broad, and the language of passion almost infinite.

77. *How to awaken Approval.*—To awaken approval, the good qualities of the action or the character must be dwelt upon, and vividly brought before the mind. Men instinctively love justice, especially when maintaining itself against strong temptations. What seems to be disinterested benevolence excites the warmest approbation. Instinctively also we sympathize with those who struggle against wrong, even though they yield at last, and the emotion of sympathy may be awakened by a presentation of the extenuating circumstances growing out of temptation, or ignorance, or wrong education, or deception.

Suffering endured by the innocent or helpless awakens sympathy, more or less intense, according to the degree of the suffering. If this is conjoined with good positive qualities in the sufferer, such as patience, benevolence, disinterested affection, earnest truth, the liveliest compassion is awakened.

What a vast field, then, lies open before the orator, who either describes facts, or calls upon his imagination to invent combinations of characters and events surpassing, if possible, any realities in interest and complexity.

78. *How to awaken Disapproval.*—So emotions of

disapproval enlarge this field. Pictures of tyranny, whether exercised by a sovereign over a nation, or the head of a family, or the master of servants; covetousness, leading to the violation of right, and of natural affection; malice, steadily hunting down an innocent victim; envy, hating and slandering and destroying the innocent simply because they prosper; the selfish, ruining the virtuous for personal gratification, animal or mental; and all kinds of injustice, excite abhorrence, and detestation and revenge. All these chords are to be touched, sometimes singly, sometimes many together, sometimes producing harmony, and sometimes intentional discord, by the skillful orator.

79. *Application to the Rhetoric of the Pulpit.*—In this fact lies the boundless power of the oratory of the pulpit. The preacher of religion deals with all actual human character. It is his business to commend all forms of virtue, and to show the detestableness of all forms of vice. In addition to all that is human, he has also the supernal emotions of the Supreme Being toward man, the immaculate character of the Saviour in his relations to man, to portray. His subjects, if they lack the vividness of the appeals made by the lawyer, growing out of present and personal circumstances, and if they are not so direct as the appeals of statesmen on subjects that call for immediate political action, still take hold of the highest and dearest interests of man, and are absolutely boundless in their scope and variety.

80. *Degrees of Emotion considered, with Reference to Figurative Language.*—To awaken gentle emotion,



pleasing or painful, it is only needful to set before the mind perspicuously the characters, facts, or actions, or thoughts that naturally produce it. The fancy may ornament the description, and figurative language is appropriate. Even a highly ornamented style may not interfere with the impression. But when the passion, painful or pleasing, becomes strong, the language must become more direct. Ornaments will be discarded. Figures only the most abrupt and condensed, and perhaps not strictly correct according to severe rule, will be suggested—mixed metaphors, if ever, are allowable—and the sentences are short and strong. Passion discards superfluities and niceties of expression. Strong passion loses self-consciousness. When a man has time to *say* that he is angry, or is inclined to think whether he is angry or not, his passion is more sentimental than real.

81. *How far egotistical References are proper.*—Quiet emotion, held under control by the intellect, is more self-conscious, and often leads to egotistical expressions. Thus Henry Clay said in an eloquent speech, properly endeavoring to produce *emotion* that should lead to action :

“I have no desire for office, not even the highest. The most exalted is but a prison, in which the incarcerated incumbent daily receives his cold, heartless visitants, marks his weary hours, and is cut off from the practical enjoyment of all the blessings of genuine freedom. Pass this bill, and I am willing to go home, and renounce public service forever.”

So Daniel Webster, in his great speech, full of emotion himself, awakened unselfish appreciation of merit anywhere, and produced a contempt for his opponent,

who had manifested a different sentiment, by exclaiming :

“When I shall be found, sir, in my place here in the Senate or elsewhere, to sneer at public merit because it happened to spring up beyond the little limits of my own State or neighborhood ; when I refuse, for any such cause, or for any cause, the homage due to American talent, to elevated patriotism, to sincere devotion to liberty and the country—if I see extraordinary capacity and virtue in any son of the South—and if, moved by local prejudice, or gangrened by State jealousy, I get up here to abate the tithe of a hair from his just character and fame, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.”

How deep the emotion in the speech of the Irishman Emmett, when about to receive his sentence of death for what was called treason !

“I have but a few words more to say. I am going to my cold and silent grave ; my lamp of life is nearly extinguished ; my race is run ; the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom. I have but one request to make at my departure from this world : it is the charity of its silence ! Let no man write my epitaph ; for as no man who knows my motives dare now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them and me repose in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I am done.”

82. *Pathos*.—What is commonly called Pathos in a speaker or writer is an emotion of pity or deep interest awakened by the suffering of others, generally associated with a respect for their moral character, and perhaps a love of them for some extraordinary excellence. It is a sympathetic pain, not wholly without pleasure. Washington Irving’s description of the death of the wife of Emmett on account of her grief, and his description of the burial of a mother, are full of pathos. Dickens’s description of the death of Little

Nell, in the "Old Curiosity Shop," is deeply touching. Pathos is a great element of power in the pulpit.

It might be supposed that inasmuch as the passion must exist before it can be expressed, and that if it exists it will naturally clothe itself in appropriate language, no rules of Rhetoric will compass it or help the orator. But if its power is known, and the best examples of its expression are studied, its appropriate expression will become more natural and easy.

83. *A common Fault.* — The great fault of many writers is an attempt to express pathos that they do not feel, and particularly to overload their productions with empty declamation *about* passion, instead of encouraging the true feeling where it should exist, and expressing it in simple language. In such a case the speaker defeats his own purpose, and excites only disgust.

## CHAPTER XI.

## TASTE, AND ITS CULTIVATION.

84. *Definition, and Illustrations.*—TASTE is the susceptibility to pleasure from works of art.

The pleasure, however, which is awakened by the utility of a work, is not primarily attributed to the Taste, but particularly the gratification arising from its beauty, or from the qualities which seem designed primarily to please. A house may be strong, durable, in a healthy location, convenient, and therefore please our judgment on account of its utility; but it may be at the same time ill-shapen, of a disagreeable color, and so placed, with reference to the streets and the localities around, as to offend our sense of the fitness of things. In such a case we say that, though useful, it is built in poor taste.

A written production or speech ought to please us if it accomplishes its end, and so it does in that respect; but if, in addition to accomplishing its main purpose—whatever that may be—it pleases us by its beauty, appropriateness, and conformity to what we think is fitting and proper, it is peculiarly commendable.

Nor is that all: whatever exhibits good taste is thereby so much the more likely to receive attention, and to exert its full force, perhaps indeed more than it

deserves for its intrinsic merit. Beauty is desirable in itself, for its own power to please.

85. *Essential Beauty in Composition.*—There is undoubtedly essential beauty in well-chosen language, well-constructed sentences, well-arranged arguments, a due admixture of plain and figurative expressions, a proper structure of the entire composition. A good taste recognizes genuine beauty, and also is displeased at its absence, and pained at deformity.

86. *Is there any Standard of Taste?*—The standard of Taste is inflexible, so far as it regards intrinsic beauty alone, but the mind is influenced by education, so that persons in one age may approve what is disapproved in another age. A nation may have a peculiar standard of Taste on some matters, and to a certain extent. French writers, for instance, usually break up their pages into many paragraphs, and write in a sharp, pointed style; German writers, on the average, make longer paragraphs. This is a mere national fashion, to which there are many exceptions, and in both cases it may prove temporary.

There are so many varieties of beauty, esteemed so variously by different persons, and there are so many artificial or cultivated preferences, that it is a recognized truth that disputes on matters of taste can not be absolutely settled.

87. *Criticism.* — Criticism is the subjecting of the writings and speeches of others to examination according to the rules of Rhetoric and Taste, and the assigning of reasons for their approval or disapproval. It is a healthful practice when not indulged in excess-

ively, but a man may be so superfluously critical of others as to intimidate himself. As a matter of fact, the severest critics are often feeble performers. It is easier to destroy, or to find fault with, than to build.

88. *How Criticism should be practiced.*—In the criticism of a production, we should first ascertain its object, and approve or disapprove that according to our judgment. We should next consider its general drift of character, its strength or feebleness, and whether or not it has attained its purpose. Then it may be examined with reference to its general appropriateness of style—of thought, of language, of illustration, of adaptation—and, in fact, with reference to any actual or desirable quality. Honest criticisms are valuable, and to criticise exhaustively is a rare art.

89. *The Cultivation of Taste.*—Taste may be cultivated by familiarity with productions that have borne the test of examination, and are generally approved, by reading critical writings, by making criticisms, and by rigid adherence to rules in our own productions.

90. *An Example of Criticism.*—Would it not encumber this book too largely, some specimens of long productions would here be inserted and criticised, but perhaps space may be saved by selecting some book with which all are familiar. Take, then, the Book of Job in the Bible, and examine it simply as a literary document.

What is its object? •Evidently to present the life and character of Job.

But why present his life? Evidently because it was very extraordinary, illustrating most signally the

fact that a good man may suffer intensely and for a long time, and yet, if he preserves his integrity, in the end he will be delivered, and his integrity rewarded.

The object, then, is good, the theme is sublime.

It being in the form of a portraiture of character, and several other personages to be introduced, with conversations, a poetical or dramatic style is rightly chosen.

Observe the simplicity of the introduction, the conciseness and rapidity of the narrative awakening intense interest. When other characters come to be introduced, observe how each preserves his own personal style, and that at the last, previous to the closing up of the narrative, the thoughts and expressions attributed to God are the sublimest ever uttered, and in the most appropriate phrase.

This criticism is indeed entirely eulogistic, and but faintly expresses the opinion of every competent judge of the Book of Job, simply as a rhetorical production.

91. *Exaggeration a common Fault.*—A common fault in earnest writers is an over-statement of a thought, which should especially be avoided in deliberative, sober productions. We think that Dr. Whately is open to this charge in the second paragraph of Part IV. of his Rhetoric, on Elocution. He says:

“Probably not a single instance could be found of any one who has attained, by the study of any system of instruction that has hitherto appeared, a really good delivery; but there are many—probably nearly as many as have fully tried the experiment—who have by this means been totally spoiled; who have fallen irrecoverably into an affected style of *spouting*, worse, in all respects, than their original mode of delivery.”

Dr. Whately was really too strong a writer to resort to such extravagant and illogical statements as this.

Criticism is often unappreciative and superficial, even when it assumes to be profound and magisterial. A mere mathematician can not properly criticise a poem, nor a mere book-worm an oration. Some speakers will attract large audiences in spite of the violation of many rules of elocution, and some writings will press themselves into extreme popularity in spite of condemnation and ridicule by the critical profession. A truly wise critic will discern the true elements of power in such cases, and make his exposure of the unnecessary defects and blemishes so much the more instructive and efficient.



## CHAPTER XII.

## STYLE MODIFIED BY THE NATURE OF THE PRODUCTION.

92. *The Four Objects of Writers and Speakers.*—ALL the objects of authors may be reduced to these four: to instruct, convince, persuade, and amuse. Some productions may be designed to accomplish several of these objects, some only one; but nearly all have a leading purpose, belonging to one of these four classes.

93. *Didactic Productions.*—Writings, the prime object of which is to instruct, may be called didactic, such as text-books describing any science or art, law-books, scientific treatises, cyclopædias, many books of travels, guide-books, reports of investigating committees, deeds, and many other legal papers. In didactic writings perspicuity is particularly essential, and ornament is generally superfluous. Lord Brougham says on this subject:

“ I have been somewhat mortified of late years at perceiving a tendency to fine writing and declamation among our men of science, and I ascribe it, in some degree, to the more general diffusion of scientific knowledge, which naturally introduces the more popular style of composition. \* \* \* In truth, however, that vile florid style darkens instead of illustrating; and while we can never write too clearly to the people, we never can write too simply, if our design be to write plainly and intelligibly. \* \* \* I have seen a mathematical discussion, by a very able and learned man, in two consecutive pages of which I reckoned

up above twenty metaphors—all tending to darken the subject, to say nothing of poetical quotations without mercy.”\*

Disraeli well remarks that such writings admit of but little ornament, but the attention may be relieved by introducing other thoughts, suggested by association. As a good example of this, he refers to a work of Dr. Arbuthnot on “Coins, Weights, and Measures,” which he has managed to make interesting as well as instructive, by such remarks as that “the polite Augustus, the emperor of the world, had neither any glass in his windows, nor a shirt to his back.”

Lord Stanley, President of the Statistical Section of the British Scientific Association, remarked: “You can all say what you have to say in a few words if you will think it over beforehand. In addressing an educated audience, a good deal may be taken for granted.”

94. *Logical Productions*.—When the object of the writer is to convince, the rules of logic must be observed, and the graces of style must be subordinate to strength and correctness of thought.

Reports of committees, pleas, controversial articles, defenses against charges, and other purely argumentative productions, belong to this class.

95. *Persuasion*.—Persuasion, which is designed to add to conviction an impulse toward action, may make use of all the graces and arts of composition, according to the ability and judgment of the author. Ad-

\* Dialogues on Instinct ; with an Analytical View on the Researches on Fossil Osteology, by Henry, Lord Brougham, F.R.S., etc. (Philadelphia), pp. 90, 91.

dressess, sermons, orations, essays, illustrations of all kinds, and almost every species of composition, may be devoted to this purpose.

96. *Writings designed simply to Amuse.*—But besides the above-mentioned objects, many productions are designed simply to amuse. This object, in its place, is as laudable as any other. Not only many humorous and witty productions belong to this class, but also many essays, descriptions, discussions, and even addresses seek to interest and entertain, not by presenting new information, not by showing the rightfulness of any opinion or course of action, but simply by expressing thoughts in such a way as to occupy the mind and please the reader or hearer.

97. *A mixed Object.*—It should also be noticed that few productions are purely didactic, or logical, or hortatory, or amusing. In some all these purposes are blended, and few are destitute of more than one of them. It is superfluous to enumerate all the various kinds of productions, but a few of the leading classes will be noticed.

98. *Morality of Rhetoric.*—One principle ought, however, to be understood by every writer. It is not a worthy object simply to produce a good specimen of composition of any kind. Rhetoric is not an end, but a means. We do not write that we may make books, nor speak that we may pronounce orations, but to produce thought and feeling in others. We can never properly appreciate Rhetoric unless we understand its true aim. While, however, it is a means of exerting influence on other minds, it also tends, re-

flexively, to strengthen and discipline the mind of one who studies it and obeys its principles. It is a legitimate and proper thing for one mind to influence another. It was by rhetoric as well as by logic, that such men even as Paul, and Augustine, and Bacon, and Newton, created so great an impression upon other minds. But they spoke and wrote, not to make good compositions, but to influence their fellow-men.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## ADDRESSES, LECTURES, ORATIONS, SERMONS.

99. *Definition and Description.*—SPEAKING precedes writing, and therefore a consideration of speeches naturally takes the first place.

Any expression of thought or feeling by words may be called a speech. Conversation is a series of speeches. Any one who can converse accurately, intelligently, and readily, can, by exercise, speak well in public. The daily practice of conversing correctly lays a broad and sure foundation for success, both in writing and in public speaking. All the principles of Rhetoric may be more or less applied in conversation.

Addresses are of an almost infinite variety in length, subject, character, and style. It is difficult to lay down any general rules for their construction, still some considerations on the subject may be of practical value.

100. *Addresses should have sufficient Material.*—Addresses are often deficient in fact and sentiment. The most common fault in them is too great diffuseness of style and repetition of thought. The introduction, or first part of the address, should be so constructed as naturally to enlist the favorable attention of the audi-

ence; and if any argument or statement of opinions or facts is necessary, which it is thought may be uninteresting or distasteful, it should be given after the attention and good-will of the audience are conciliated. The conclusion of an address ought to be forcible. There is room often for wit, illustration, argument, and the display of almost every kind of power of thought and feeling, in this kind of composition.

101. *Should be Written.*—It is an excellent practice for young speakers to write out their addresses in full, and commit them to memory, though, after some practice, it will be easy to pronounce the address after having memorized only the order of the thoughts, trusting to the activity of the mind at the time to suggest proper words, and even additional thoughts. Finally, one may often speak efficiently without previously writing on the subject, though very few persons can excel as speakers who do not write much, and often write their speeches.

102. *Opinion of Brougham on this Subject.*—The opinion of that successful orator, Lord Brougham, on this subject, is worthy of consideration. In his Inaugural Discourse, when elected Lord rector of the University of Glasgow, delivered to the students, he said:

“I should lay it down as a rule, admitting of no exception, that a man will speak well in proportion as he has written much, and that, with equal talents, he will be the finest extempore speaker, when no time for preparing is allowed, who has prepared himself the most sedulously when he had an opportunity of delivering a premeditated speech. All the exceptions which I have ever heard cited to this principle are apparent ones only; proving nothing more than that some few men of rare genius have become great speakers without preparation; in no wise showing that with preparation they would not have

reached a much higher pitch of excellence. The admitted superiority of the ancients in all oratorical accomplishments is the best proof of my position; for their careful preparation is undeniable; nay, in Demosthenes (of whom Quintilian says that his style indicates more premeditation than Cicero's) we can trace, by the recurrence of the same passage, with progressive improvements, in different speeches, how nicely he polished the more exquisite parts of his compositions. I could point out favorite passages, occurring as often as three several times, with variations and manifest amendment.

"I am now requiring not merely great preparation while the speaker is learning his art, but after he has accomplished his education. The most splendid effort of the most mature orator will be always finer for being previously elaborated with much care.

"Such preparation is quite consistent with the introduction of passages prompted by the occasion, nor will the transition from the one to the other be perceptible in the execution of an accomplished master. I have known skillful and attentive hearers completely deceived in this matter, and taking for extemporaneous passages what previously existed in the manuscript, and were pronounced without the variation of a particle or pause."

103. *Manuscript Addresses*.—These directions are applicable in some extent even to those who habitually use the manuscript when addressing an audience, for there are careless habits of writing as well as of speaking. But it is to be regretted that so many public speakers are binding themselves to this slavish habit. The memory should be trained till he who aspires to accomplish the greatest effect can deliver easily what he has previously wrought out, and add efficiently what the inspiration of the hour suggests.

104. *Lectures*.—A Lecture is generally a written production upon some particular topic of value, designed to be read before an audience, though lectures are sometimes given from memory.

Lectures may be very various in character, but generally they should preserve unity. Some one central

topic should be presented in a lecture, and though others may be introduced for illustration, all should be subordinate to the main subject. A lecture should be carefully written. Offenses against grammar, or style, or even good taste, are not excusable in a lecture.

Generally, a good lecture will be found to consist of the following parts: an introduction, a statement of the subject, a discussion or full exhibition of the lecturer's views on the subject, and a conclusion.

The highest kind of eloquence is not to be aimed at in a lecture, as its object is either to please or instruct, rather than to persuade or move to immediate action.

Inasmuch as the oration is similar to the lecture, much of what is said upon the latter will also apply to the former.

105. *Oration*.—An Oration is a speech of the very highest order.

An oration, to have its greatest effect, should not be read, but pronounced without manuscript, and from a full heart. Its object is not primarily to instruct, for, aiming at that, it would be a lecture; nor simply to prove a proposition, for it would then be but a part of a discussion; but to arouse the intellect, to fire the heart, often to move to action.

It is evident that no beauty, or elegance, or source of power in expression, is inappropriate in an oration. The most condensed apothegm, the most startling antithesis, the most sparkling wit, the most forcible comparison, the boldest metaphors, the most elaborate pe-



riods, the greatest variety of style, are admissible in the oration.

Still the orator must not forget that his production is designed for the ear, and not for the printed page, and he should never forget that an obscurity which would be pardoned in an essay will condemn an oration, and he should not neglect those adaptations of style to the habits and feelings of hearers which courtesy and good taste will suggest.

An oration has the same parts as a lecture, except that the conclusion is usually called the peroration.

No rules can be given for the construction of an oration which are to be universally followed. The introduction should usually be pleasing, precise, and brief. Long introductions, and the formal presentation of a subject after speaking a few minutes, are apt to displease the hearers.

The main subject of the oration may be entered upon with or without a formal explication; but if one is made, it should be perspicuous.

The peroration should be as forcible and impressive as the orator can make it. It need not be loud or excited; it may be pathetic and subdued; it may be simply decided, or congratulatory, or defiant, but it should be earnest, and express some passion justly excited in both speaker and people. Without this, the oration will be pronounced a failure.

106. *Some specimen Orations.*—There are many speeches which were delivered as pleas, or for the attainment of specific purposes, which are dignified by the name of orations, on account of their great excel-

lence, such as the "Orations of Demosthenes," designed to stimulate the Athenians against Philip, the "Orations of Cicero," which were either pleas or political speeches; but the appellation is properly confined to such speeches as addresses pronounced at the funerals of eminent men, the beginning or completion of some great enterprise, the anniversary of some momentous event, or some occasion calculated to awaken deep emotion without exciting differences or hostility of feelings. The addresses of Webster and Everett upon the anniversary of the Landing of the Pilgrims, of Kossuth, the Hungarian refugee, upon arriving at New York, of Choate upon the death of Webster, of Simpson on the death of Abraham Lincoln, are masterly specimens of orations.

107. *Practical Directions.*—The first requisite toward the preparation of an oration is a clear understanding of the theme; for, though no subject is to be presented and formally argued, there must be in every oration one predominant object of thought which by the might of the orator is to be constructed into a temple, with all the proper decorations and surroundings.

Though it is designed to be spoken and not read, yet it should be carefully written. It is undeniable that many if not all of the most splendid orations, both of ancient and modern times, have been written out previous to delivery. Rarely has a speech deserving the name been pronounced without having been written. Addresses have been given in debate or under strong excitement, equal in force and beauty to orations, but orations proper presuppose prepa-

ration. And yet in the noblest exhibitions of oratory the speaker is not confined to the previous production of the pen or of his own mind. Memory is attended by reason and imagination. New views, new images, new feelings may arise and demand expression, and spontaneously clothe themselves in the most appropriate garb, and thus the orator combines past and present energy to produce the result.

108. *Pleas*.—Pleas are a specific kind of addresses varying with the almost infinite diversity of subjects upon which lawyers are called to address, sometimes the judge, sometimes a jury, and sometimes both together. Ordinary pleas, designed to produce only a temporary effect, aim simply at perspicuity and force. Pleas made upon very exciting occasions, such as criminal trials which awaken great attention, or legal disputes in which great interests are at stake, partake more of the nature of an oration, modified indeed, but admitting a variety of style and the highest eloquence.

109. *Sermons*.—Sermons are often orations, though sometimes lectures, and sometimes simply addresses. They admit every conceivable variety of style, depending upon circumstances. Some are didactic and exegetical; some are controversial; some are designed to awaken a particular passion, and some are genuine orations. The particular characteristic of a sermon is, that it purports to be a sincere effort to induce the audience to obey the will of the Supreme Being, and should, therefore, always be accompanied by a seriousness associated with the object. The same fact requires that an appearance of art, or attempt to dis-

play ability, should not be exposed, and whatever tends to withdraw attention from the subject to the speaker should be especially avoided. Many of the best specimens of the oration are sermons, such as some of the discourses of Massillon, Robert Hall, Edward Irving, Melvill, Mason, Olin, Beecher, and others.

Farther views upon this subject will be presented when we come to treat of Invention, and Practical Rhetoric and Elocution.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## EPISTOLARY COMPOSITION, ESSAYS, ETC., ETC.

110. *Letters*.—VERY few are the persons who do not more or less frequently attempt to express their thoughts and feelings to others by writing letters. It is always regarded as a direct proof of ignorance when an epistle violates the rules of grammar, or is glaringly inconsistent with the primary principles of rhetoric.

A letter should, of course, be properly dated, addressed, signed, and superscribed, and the language should be correct. Perspicuity is essential, for ambiguity is vexatious to the recipient, and unpardonable in the writer. No person should presume to write a letter who has not learned to write his name and other words so that other persons can read them.

111. *Familiar Letters*.—Letters of friendship may, of course, be written in a careless, confidential style, partaking much of the character of the conversation common between the parties; but every scholar should regard it as unbecoming to write what, so far as the form of the composition is concerned, he would be unwilling to see printed for the public eye.

112. *Letters for the Public*.—Letters are sometimes written for the public, and made the vehicle of careful, methodical thought. Such letters, though pre-

serving the form of a personal address, and often interspersed with merely personal matters, are much like essays, and may be written in the most elevated and labored style. Such are many of the letters of John Foster. Many biographies abound in the letters of the persons whose characters are described. The letters of George Washington are written in a noble classical style, almost invariably correct in expression, and always dignified and perspicuous, though often written in great haste.

Correspondents of scientific and other societies often embody their views upon some subject in the form of a letter designed to be read to the whole society, or printed in their transactions. Such writings, though carefully preserving the form of letters in the address and signature, may be written in the style of didactic writings, and yet advantage may be taken of the letter form to express more personal feeling than would be proper in an essay.

Correspondents of newspapers often employ the form of letter-writing in this way. The bulletins of military and naval officers are generally in the form of letters. Happy is the commander who, in addition to efficiency and success, can command a brief and vigorous style. Napoleon was as successful with the pen as with the sword. The reports of Washington were such as might have been expected from his dignified, noble character.

113. *Specimen Letter from Writings of Washington.*—The following private letter from Washington to Franklin may not be out of place as a specimen. Dr.

Franklin, in the 84th year of his age, wrote a letter to President Washington, in which he spoke of his own excruciating bodily pain, but congratulated the President on the success of his administration, and averred that in whatever state he might be in a future life, he should retain esteem and affection for him, to which Washington thus replied :

“New York, 23 September, 1789.

“DEAR SIR,—The affectionate congratulations on the recovery of my health, and the warm expressions of personal friendship which were contained in your letter of the 16th instant, claim my gratitude. And the consideration that it was written when you were afflicted with a painful malady, greatly increases my obligation for it.

“Would to God, my dear sir, that I could congratulate you upon the removal of that excruciating pain under which you labor, and that your existence might close with as much ease to yourself, as its continuance has been beneficial to our country and useful to mankind; or if the united wishes of a free people, joined with the earnest prayers of every friend to science and humanity, could relieve the body from pains or infirmities, that you could claim an exemption on this score. But this can not be, and you have within yourself the only resource to which we can confidently apply for relief, a philosophic mind.

“If to be venerated for benevolence, if to be admired for talents, if to be esteemed for patriotism, if to be beloved for philanthropy, can gratify the human mind, you must have the pleasing consolation to know that you have not lived in vain. And I flatter myself that it will not be ranked among the least grateful occurrences of your life to be assured, that, so long as I retain my memory, you will be recollected with respect, veneration, and affection by

“Your sincere friend,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.”

#### ESSAYS, TREATISES, DISSERTATIONS, REVIEWS.

Didactic productions not designed to be pronounced by their authors, but written for the press, claim attention. Under this head must be classed *Essays*, *Tracts*, *Dissertations*, and kindred productions, variously styled *views*, *thoughts*, etc.

114. *Essays*.—An Essay is a production *attempting* to present any subject whatever to the reader. Short productions, like many articles in newspapers, and like the papers in Addison's "Spectator," the "Atlantic Monthly," and similar periodicals, are essays. Sometimes the name is given to a long and labored writing. Thus Locke modestly styled his immortal work an "Essay on the Human Understanding," though in fact it is a treatise.

As essays vary in length, subject, and pretension, few general rules on their style can be given. Some of the best specimens of English writing are in this form. It was indeed by this kind of writing that a taste for reading was first cultivated among the people, and some of the earliest essays, such as those found in the "Spectator," "Rambler," etc., are justly ranked among the English classics. In them largely our language was reduced to grammatical correctness and rhetorical force; and though they are often now over-estimated, and perhaps surpassed, yet it should not be forgotten that many of the ablest productions are in this form. Editorials in our best periodicals are often able essays.

An essay should generally have one leading subject, one prominent thought or fact to state, or error to controvert, or end to accomplish. The style should correspond with its purpose, and may vary from the simple and colloquial to the most condensed, abstruse, and profound. It should not be so direct as in the address, and usually the third person should be employed in preference to the first to denote the author; or if



the first person is preferred, the plural number is preferable to the singular. In this way the character of impersonality is preserved in the author.

115. *Reviews*.—Reviews are a species of essays that have sprung up in modern times. The first publication formally devoted to this kind of writing was the “*Edinburgh Review*,” established in 1817. This species of writing seems to have grown out of a desire to exercise a kind of literary and moral censorship over the press, by which to stamp as current works truly valuable, and thus to introduce them to public favor, and to condemn to oblivion the unworthy. Also they aim often to give an abstract of the most valuable thoughts of the various works published, and to present other opinions upon the same subjects. This censorship has often exerted a great power. Some valuable works have been for a long time doomed to neglect, and inferior works puffed into undeserved notoriety by reviews. The young poet Keats was so affected by the condemnation of his writings by the “*Edinburgh Review*” that it is said his death was hastened, while on the other hand Byron, when receiving like treatment, retorted so violently in his “*English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*,” as to humble the reviews and permanently weaken their power.

Of late, as the public have become more intelligent, and the number of independent readers has increased, many a work condemned by reviews has achieved great popularity, and many works highly commended have soon sunk to merited oblivion. Still much of the best writing in the language is in the form of reviews.

116. *Dissertations and Treatises*.—Dissertations are essays on specific subjects. Treatises are more thorough, methodical, and extended. More elevated than the essay, they aspire to more than a temporary influence. Such works as “Bacon’s Organon” and “Edwards on the Will” are treatises.

The style of such a work should be dignified and strong. Allusions to temporary phases of fashion, and even to current history, should be sparing. The writer should divest himself of the prejudices of his time and place, and look into the common heart of human nature, and present the permanent instead of the transitory, the pure metal without dross.

117. *Tracts*.—A Tract is literally a writing *drawn out*, or thoroughly presenting the subject considered, like Milton’s “*Tractate on Education* ;” though strangely enough, in modern times, the term is chiefly used to denote a brief presentation of a subject on one or two pages, usually printed alone on a single sheet of paper. Neatness and completeness, and point and power, should be aimed at in such productions.

## CHAPTER XV.

## HISTORICAL WRITING.

118. *Anecdotes*.—THE simplest form of history is the Anecdote. An anecdote meant originally a fact not published. The incident was called by that name because it was considered either too trivial to become a part of dignified history, or of such a character that it ought not to be given to the public eye. The word is now used to denote any particular fact or incident that may be detached from its connection with other facts, and related either to illustrate a principle or to amuse the hearer.

An anecdote should always have a point, or express a definite and singular fact, and should be so related as to bring out that central thought clearly. All extraneous matter and uninteresting incident should be omitted. If an anecdote claims to be true, it should have that character, otherwise it becomes a mere supposition or fancy sketch. Many so-called anecdotes are simply founded on truth.

It is a happy art to relate an anecdote well. The most dignified addresses will admit them, if they are appropriate and well told.

“A story should, to please, at least seem true,  
Be *apropos*, well told, concise, and new.”

A statement of a fact for illustration may be termed an anecdote. Thus Warburton, in a "Discourse against Free-thinkers," after attempting to show by argument that all their efforts had inured to the advantage of Christianity, concludes with the following anecdote :

"Herodotus tells us, that at what time their deity, the Nile, returns into his ancient channel, and the husbandman hath committed the good seed to the opening glebe, it was their custom to turn in whole droves of *swine* to range, to trample, root up, and destroy at pleasure. And now nothing appeared but desolation, while the ravages of the obscene herd had killed every cheerful hope of future plenty ; when, on the issue, it was seen that all their perversity and dirty taste had effected was only this : that the *seed* took better root, incorporated more kindly with the soil, and at length shot up in a more luxuriant and abundant harvest."

119. *Memoirs and Biographies*. — Memoirs are a branch of literature extensively cultivated in modern times. They are informal and incomplete, and sometimes unmethodical recollections and descriptions of remarkable persons or events. The order and dignity of regular biography or narrative are not required.

Biographies are more thorough and minute than Memoirs, being descriptions of the lives and characters of individuals.

To write the life of a remarkable person well is a very difficult matter, and requires a high order of talent. The biographer must be able to appreciate the actions and motives of the person whose life he is delineating, besides having the power to describe correctly and vividly, omitting all that is unnecessary or uninteresting. Boswell's "Life of Dr. Samuel Johnson" has been extravagantly commended by Macau-

lay, who expressed himself on this subject as usual by an antithesis: "Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biographies. Boswell was one of the smallest men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all." His sentiment has been repeated by many others, who find it convenient to echo what a great writer has carelessly expressed. His work partakes more of the character of memoirs than of a genuine biography, and is valuable for the simplicity and freedom with which it describes the very words and actions of its hero. Sparks's "Life of Washington" would have been more valuable, voluminous as it is, had it been more free and unrestrained. The lives of various Americans written by James Parton, Esq., are excellent specimens of this kind of writing.

120. *Autobiographies*. — Autobiographies are Memoirs, or more complete Biographies, written by the individuals themselves whose lives are portrayed. These are apt to be partial, prolix, and unfair. Still they may abound in gossip, and they may reveal secrets of action and of character that no second person could learn. Therefore some of the best specimens of this kind of writing have been very popular. Good taste will be required to avoid offense by an exhibition of undue self-esteem.

121. *Journals and Diaries*. — Journals or Diaries are a species of historical composition, usually not written for the public, and yet which in some instances have been published, and have shed great light upon contemporaneous history. The skill and power of a cultivated man will be seen in his daily notes and mem-

oranda. Aside from strict accuracy in dates and facts, which morality would require, the style should be correct, inasmuch as the habits both of speaking and writing, indulged in private, will be sure to exhibit themselves in public.

122. *Books of Travel*.—Books of Travel are among the most abundant of what may be ranked as the fugitive productions of the day. The very best of them are likely soon to lose their popularity and be superseded by others. The most of them are offensively minute, describing objects which need to be actually seen in order to be appreciated, or entering disagreeably into matters of no interest to readers. Some of them, however, hold a high rank among instructive books, as "Eothen," by Alexander W. Kinglake, "Travels in Greece," by John L. Stephens, and several ones by Bayard Taylor, Esq. Rev. David Livingstone's "Researches in Africa" is a model work.

Skill in this kind of writing is exhibited nearly as much by omitting the irrelevant, as by presenting what is really instructive or amusing.

123. *History Proper*.—History proper demands the highest talent. Mere annals, or condensed chronological statements of events, require a happy discrimination, by which unimportant details shall be omitted, and the right degree of prominence be given to important events. And when the historian seeks to rise above a mere chronological recital of facts, and to present the character and actions of any age vividly and correctly before the reader, there is no limit to the ability that can be displayed. A true historian

must not only describe the surface of events, but so arrange them as to show their connection and dependence, and must give their causes and effects. He should be a thoroughly educated man, familiar with political economy, law, legislative processes, the military science and art, the various arts and employments of men, philosophy, and religion. He should be free from prejudice, and do justice to the actions and motives of men whom he does not approve. He must distinguish between the false and the true, and not present conjectures as facts. Withal he must so illustrate and enliven his narrative as to command the attention of his readers.

For the want of proper qualifications, the most of histories are nearly worthless, and many are manifestly false. The best productions of this class have been written by men who have toiled with great patience and assiduity to qualify themselves for the work, and have taken especial pains to perfect their style. Among them may be mentioned such authors as Thucydides, Livy, and Tacitus, Gibbon, Arnold, Grote, Macaulay, Bancroft, Prescott, and Motley. Though widely various, the style of each of these may be regarded in many respects as a model.

124. *Pragmatic History*.—Sometimes a historian has a great moral end in view, stating both the causes and consequences of events; as, for instance, to show that luxury saps the vitals of a nation. Great care should be taken in such writings, lest that some false opinion or partisan purpose should warp the judgment of the writer.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## REPRESENTATIVE WRITING, AND FICTION.

125. *Definition.*—IN Representative Writing persons are represented as actually speaking, and generally addressing each other. Under this title come soliloquies, dialogues, and the literature of the theatre.

126. *Dialogues.*—Many of the finest literary productions in the world are in the form of dialogues. Among these are the writings of Plato, and some of the philosophical writings of Cicero. In dialogues designed to be read, and not recited or spoken, a style less colloquial, and in some passages entirely free from a colloquial character may be employed. The personages represented as speaking may be real or fictitious. If historical characters are selected, they should not be misrepresented, and the style of thought and expression should correspond with their known ability and habits. Socrates or Paul should not be made to speak as a clown, nor Nero as a Christian, nor Cleopatra as a diligent and prudent matron. It is a hazardous experiment to represent well-known and marked historical personages as conversing with each other, and of the many who have attempted it, few have given to the world productions that have achieved popularity. If the characters are represented as liv-



ing in this world, of course anachronisms must be avoided, as only those who lived at the same time and place could be supposed to hold conversation with each other. In order to bring together marked characters of different nations and ages, the scene is often laid in another world, as in Lord Littleton's "Dialogues of the Dead," an excellent book written in the eighteenth century. Some of the dialogues were between contemporaries who had lately died, and others between remarkable personages of past times, without regard to their nationality, language, or age, and yet each spoke on subjects in which he might reasonably be presumed to be interested, and in a style corresponding with his known character. A far superior work of the kind is "Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen," by Walter Savage Landor, Esq. In these, noted men speak of the subjects in which they were known to be adepts, and the dialogues are made the vehicle of much valuable thought and personal opinion of the author.

127. *Dialogues intended to be Recited.*—Dialogues intended to be committed to memory and recited, should be more spirited, and must not offend a sense of propriety by being unnatural or improbable. To this class belong all plays, comedies, and tragedies, constituting the literature of the theatre. From the earliest times, and in nearly all languages, this kind of writing has been common, and it includes much of the ripest thought and best literature in the world. To the dramatists of Greece and Rome we are indebted for the most vivid portraiture which we have of the ordinary

life and thoughts of the people; and though undoubtedly the fictitious representations and conversations are exaggerated, still it is easy for the critic to make due allowance for this, and thus obtain much valuable information that otherwise would have been lost. In our own language we need but mention the many-sided Shakspeare, whose vast range of observation and thought, and keen analysis of passion, and portraiture of nearly all possible experience, seem almost superhuman.

128. *Value of this Kind of Writings.*—Whatever may be thought of the moral effects of theatrical representations, that literature of this kind will always be written, and that much of it will be recited, can not be doubted. Even in the simplest forms of dialogues for school exhibitions much skill can be shown. When the speakers are fictitious, each character should be consistent with itself. Sentiments or passions incongruous with each other, or never found together in real life, should not be expressed by the same person.

There is room in such productions for the greatest possible variety of style, and for the widest and noblest range of thought. Care, however, should be exercised not to make the production tedious by too long speeches, and a stilted, artificial, and bombastic style should especially be avoided. The poet may draw from his own fancy; the scholar from his library; but the proper study of the dramatic writer, whether in verse or in prose, is man—man, as he exists in society.

129. *Soliloquies.*—Soliloquies are the vocal expression of thought and passion by persons alone, supposed

to be speaking aloud, unaware of a listener, and perhaps unconscious of speaking. These can not with propriety be introduced except either in dramatic or fictitious writings. None who read the English language can long remain unacquainted with some of the most noted soliloquies of Shakspeare, such as those of Henry IV., Cardinal Wolsey, and Hamlet's, on Death. Almost equally well known is that on Immortality, put into the mouth of Cato by Addison, commencing :

“It must be so. Plato, thou reasonest well—  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?”

130. *The Three Unities*.—It has passed into a canon of Rhetoric, that what are called the three Unities should, at least in spirit, be preserved in dramatic writings. These are the unity of subject, the unity of time, and the unity of place. One main leading subject should be presented; the time supposed to elapse in the course of the representation should neither be so long or short as to offend a sense of propriety, and the place should correspond with what could easily be conceived to be fact.

131. *Dialogues in History*.—In history, dialogues between the important personages whose lives and actions are portrayed are often introduced, and thus the narrative is greatly enlivened. Some historians have invented these dialogues, as well as addresses supposed to have been pronounced, always endeavoring to preserve a verisimilitude in such compositions, but in modern times it is considered improper thus to mingle history and fiction, and few writers introduce any

dialogues or addresses, except such as were actually uttered.

132. *Fiction*. — Works of fiction have a peculiar character. The larger portion of the books now published is fictitious, and the larger part of the reading is of fiction. The word scarcely needs explanation. Works in the form of narration, of memoirs, biographies, travels or histories, not presenting facts, but the imaginations of the authors, are Fiction. From the earliest times such productions have been common.

Historical fictions are those in which characters that really lived are introduced as acting and speaking, and the author preserves just so much fidelity to fact as he pleases. Many of the novels of Walter Scott belong to this class.

Similar are the works of fiction which in the form of fancied travels or correspondence, describe places, customs, and religions, with more or less fidelity. "The Travels of Anacharsis" describe the ancient world and its customs. Bulwer's "Last days of Pompeii" professes to describe the customs of that city, and the volcanic eruption by which it was overwhelmed.

No wise man will depend upon works of fiction for his historical information. He will rather guard against allowing himself to be influenced in his historic beliefs by the representations of authors whose prime aim is to please and absorb the reader, rather than to present fact.

133. *Fiction may convey Truth*. — Fiction may be the vehicle of truth, but not largely of historic truth. It should rather aim to describe passion correctly, and

show its legitimate consequences. It may indeed range widely over the entire domain of science and opinion, so far as they can be illustrated in the action and conversation and experience of fancied personages.

134. *Variety of Style appropriate to Fiction.*—All the rules applying to Representative Writing apply to this branch of literature. Indeed there is room in it for the exercise of every possible variety of style. Though the most of works of fiction are transient in their influence, yet as many of them secure permanent influence as, perhaps, of any department. In later years, both the moral and intellectual character of fiction have greatly improved. The "Vicar of Wakefield," "Robinson Crusoe," Johnson's "Rasselas," "Gulliver's Travels," will probably be remembered and read longer than any other productions by their respective authors. "Knickerbocker's History of New York," a burlesque production, may be remembered as long as any veritable history written by Washington Irving. The fictitious writings of Dickens have called attention to the wretchedness of the poor and ignorant in his native country, and led to efforts for their relief, while the writings of Thackeray have laid bare the follies and emptiness of a merely fashionable life more efficiently perhaps than either essays or sermons could have done. Cooper and Hawthorne have filled out much of what was lacking in history, to complete the picture of early American life. Fiction thus will always have a place in literature. It can not be relied upon to elevate the tone of morals, or to enlarge the domains of exact thought. It seeks primarily to please,

though secondarily it may profit. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," by Mrs. H. B. Stowe, has perhaps circulated more widely than any other book written in the first half of the nineteenth century, and contributed much to form opinion upon the nature of American slavery during the latest period of its existence.

No special rules farther than have already been given are needed upon this branch of literature.

## CHAPTER XVII

## POETRY.

135. *Definition.*—THE word poetry is used with so wide a latitude of meaning that few have attempted to define it accurately, and very diverse descriptions of it are given. It should be considered, first, with reference to its substance, and, second, with reference to its form.

Substantially, Poetry is thought produced by an excited imagination, and designed primarily to please.

This definition excludes narrative, the prime purpose of which is to relate facts; science, which explains the nature and causes of things; oratory, designed to enlighten and persuade, and all other merely didactic productions. Wit may or may not be a part of Poetry, but it has an empire of its own.

Shakspeare presents a vivid idea of Poetry when he says :

“ The poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven ;  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet’s pen  
Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name.”

Another poet (Byron) has defined his own art thus :

“ For what is poesy, but to create  
From overfeeling, good or ill ; and aim

At an external life, beyond our fate,  
 And be the new Prometheus of new men !  
 Bestowing fire from heaven, and then, too late  
 Finding the pleasure given repaid with pain ?”

“ All they  
 Whose intellect is an o’ermastering power  
 Which still recoils from its encumbering clay  
 Or lightens it to spirit, whatsoe’er  
 The form which their creations may essay,  
 Are bards ; the kindled marble’s bust may wear  
 More poesy upon its speaking brow  
 Than aught less than the Homeric page may bear ;  
 One noble stroke with the whole life may glow,  
 Or deify the canvas till it shine  
 With beauty so surpassing all below,  
 That they who kneel to idols so divine  
 Break no commandment, for high heaven is there  
 Transfused, transfigured : and the line  
 Of poesy, which peoples but the air  
 With thoughts and beings of our thought reflected,  
 Can do no more.”

The object of the poet, in this sense of the word, is not to instruct, not to persuade, not simply to amuse, but to allow a man to enjoy the thoughts which well up in his own soul.

136. *The more comprehensive Meaning of the term Poetry.*—Though this is the prime meaning of Poetry, it is not always used in so restricted a sense, for sometimes it embraces another object besides mere gratification, and therefore we have such divisions as didactic, patriotic, and religious poetry.

The poet is a *maker* or *creator*, as the word (from *ποιεω*, to *make*) would signify. The imagination is the creative faculty. Taking the materials already existing in the mind, and gathered by observation or its own exercise, it constructs new fabrics, mental and



moral, or adorns old themes with new garments, according to its own affluence of thought.

137. *Poetry may be employed to aid in other Productions.*—Poetry in this, its highest meaning, may be employed as an assistant in all other kinds of composition. The philosopher may clothe and illustrate the most recondite and logical discussions with poetical imagery, as Plato, Cicero, and many since have done. The orator often, by the aid of Poetry, takes his hearers into regions never before visited, and reveals to them objects wonderful to gaze upon. Even the sober historian borrows beauty from Poetry, to enliven the dullness of the theme, and Science does not altogether disdain her aid.

138. *Poetry one of the Fine Arts.*—Poetry has been called one of the Fine Arts. The sisterhood consists of Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, Poetry.

The prime object of each of the Fine Arts is to please, to elevate the taste, to communicate a special gratification of its own.

Painting and Sculpture *may* be used to instruct; Architecture *may* be used to improve buildings wholly in a utilitarian sense; but, as an art, it refers rather to rendering them pleasing to the eye and the mind; Music *may* be used to alleviate pain, or to inspire patriotism or religious feeling, but its prime purpose is to please. So Poetry is designed to produce its own peculiar gratification.

139. *Poetry compared with Painting and Sculpture.*—Poetry, in this its primitive meaning, has often been compared with Painting and Sculpture, and much dif-

ference of opinion has been expressed with reference to their comparative value.

I have already alluded to this subject in the examination of the power of words, pp. 23, 24. The discussion is indefinite, and an exact decision can not be reached. The two parties misunderstand each other. In pictures, involving only what can be seen, Painting and Sculpture are immeasurably superior to Poetry. Poetry can use only words, at best mere representatives of thoughts liable to be misunderstood. Painting can use form and colors. Combined with Sculpture, she can reproduce any scene, and depict beauties and combinations expressing passion, such as can not be described by language. But Poetry has a range of her own. She can describe not only forms, and colors, and sounds, but also events, expressed thoughts, successive actions, courses, and effects, shifting scenes, and embrace in her picture objects almost unlimited in number, time, and space. The universe of thought is hers.

Poetry, like her sister arts, does not restrict herself to facts, but constructs new creations. Painting occupies a low sphere when she confines herself to portraits of living persons or to landscapes actually seen; she must present ideal men, and animals, and angels, and skies, and lands, and seas, more grand, and variegated, and beautiful than human eye has seen. There are objects intrinsically beautiful, and even those that are singly ugly may be constructed into combinations that will charm the observer. The beautiful, the inspiring, the soothing, the pathetic, all belong to the

realm of Poetry. She deals not only with objects that may be seen and felt, but even associates herself with Music, and represents sounds, and plays with every human passion.

140. *Poetry suited to all Grades of mental Development.*—It has been thought by some that Poetry exerts its full power only over the young mind, and that as the reason is strengthened by discipline and hard practical usage, the pleasures of the imagination will be outgrown. This is a great error. Imagination is an element of the immortal mind. There is no maximum of power for it to reach. It may be disproportionately indulged, or rather the other faculties may be neglected.

Similar is the error, that the world, as it advances in culture, will outgrow Poetry. It may be true that Poetry is actually older than Prose. It is certain that a disproportionately large part of the most ancient literature is poetical in form. This may be owing to the greater vitality of Poetry, which has led it to survive its weaker and plainer associate, prosaic fact.

141. *How Poetry is modified by Science.*—But as science and philosophy advance, Poetry has new themes to work upon. Once it was absorbed with the descriptions of heroes and their companions, of wars and domestic life, of the rude gods and goddesses which an ignorant age imagined; but it has advanced now to portray deeper passion, broader views, higher aspirations, purer faith, than the ancients knew. Its realm is boundless.

In accuracy of the description of nature as it ap-

pears to the uncultivated eye, in the portraiture of the ruder and stronger passions, in sweetness and purity of versification, Homer has never been excelled. In that early age he stands on a proud eminence alone, though probably many poets preceded him; yet can any candid critic deny that in Dante, Milton, and other modern Christian poets, are found fields wholly unknown to the classic poets of antiquity, equal in their new resources, and stirring the soul even more profoundly?

142. *Imagination should be Regulated.*—Though Poetry creates, it should not be so wild and fantastic in its creations as to displease the mind. Nature has laws and limitations that must not be violated, even in fancy. Grotesque conceptions, impossible in fact, can be tolerated only in a limited degree. Repeated too often, they weary and displease. The best poet is he who imitates most closely the great Creator; and though he is allowed on his own territory to construct new combinations, makes them so harmonious as to charm and satisfy the soul.

Pain, deformity, calamity, crime, ugly and horrible conceptions of every kind, may be presented by the poet, but there should be such an under-current of sympathy with the beautiful and the good, and the roughnesses and deformities should be so smoothed and shaded off, as to please the mind.

143. *Poetry and Prophecy.*—The poet dwells more in the future than in the past. If he paints the golden age of antiquity, it is only to promise greater glories to come. The spirit of poetry is pre-eminently

fitted to blend with Christian faith and hope ; and science, though it may materialize and harden some who are too exclusively devoted to it, only opens new and wider fields in which the creative imagination may roam and revel.

144. *Value and Prevalence of Poetry.*—It would be extraneous to our object to inquire into the propriety of cultivating the poetic faculty. God has given it to man. It is not to be wrapped in a napkin and buried in the earth. It enlivens history ; it infinitely enlarges our limited home ; it directs science by anticipating its discussions, and putting the investigator on the right track ; it guides the legislator and the ruler. It has its own separate function, and is an aid and a pleasant companion in all the walks of life.

Looking only at the substance of Poetry, we may find it diffused throughout all literature : in oratory, philosophy, science. The child is a poet when in imagination it endows material things with consciousness.

Much poetry, too, has never been written. In the language of Byron :

“Many are the poets that have never penned  
Their inspiration, and perchance the best.”

Poetry as above described is the correlative, not of Prose, but of Science.

145. *The peculiar Forms of Poetry.* — But Poetry tends to clothe herself in a peculiar appropriate garb. She wreathes language into new and beautiful forms, accommodating it to her own various imagery and novel combinations of thought.

146. *Parallelism*.—One of the earliest modifications of the natural prosaic style adopted by Poetry is called Parallelism, and is found in great perfection in Hebrew literature. Parallelism consists of a double verse, or stanza, in which the second member repeats the idea expressed in the first—generally more specifically and forcibly. Thus :

“What is man, that thou regardest him?  
Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

“Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing,  
Thou hast put off my sackcloth, and girded me with gladness.”

“I will bless the Lord at all times :  
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.”

In sober prose such expressions might be regarded as tautological, but in verse the repetition was designed but to deepen the impression.

In the Hebrew the language does in some degree correspond in the correlated members. This Parallelism is sometimes called “thought-rhythm.” The mind is pleased with it, and beautiful specimens of it may be found in modern poetry as well as in the Bible. Sometimes the second sentence inverts the order of the first. We give some modern instances :

“Famine is in thy cheeks,  
Need and oppression stareth in thine eyes.”

“A little learning is a dangerous thing :  
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring :  
There shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,  
And drinking largely sobers us again.”

“Then pay the reverence of old days  
To his dead fame,  
Walk backward, with averted gaze,  
And hide the shame.”

147. *Rhythm*.—Poetry also adopts the use of rhythmical language, or expressions that have a musical sound. We see the first elements of this tendency in many of the oldest proverbs, such as “Man proposes, God disposes;” “Easy come, easy go.”

148. *Accent*.—The measuring of language by Poetry consists in the regular recurrence of similarly *accented* syllables at short intervals.

149. *Verse*.—A Verse is a limited number of syllables with an established order of accents, usually written in one line, as :

“The curfew tolls, the knell of parting day.”

Verses may vary in length and accent. We give other specimens :

“To arms ! they come ! the Greek ! the Greek !”

“In your kingdom of vanity, give him a place.”

“Take her up tenderly.”

The word verse is sometimes used to denote all forms of poetry.

150. *Stanzas*. — A collection of verses of a certain defined number and order is called a Stanza.

“Thou art, O God, the life and light  
Of all this wondrous world we see ;  
Its glow by day, its smile by night  
Are but reflections caught from Thee :  
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,  
And all things fair and bright are Thine.”

Stanzas vary much in the number of their verses or lines, also in their length, accent, and order. The most noted kind is perhaps the Spenserian stanza, of which the following is a specimen :

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,  
 There is a rapture on the lonely shore,  
 There is society where none intrudes,  
 By the deep sea, and music in its roar.  
 I love not Man the less, but Nature more,  
 From these our interviews, in which I steal  
 From all I may be, or have been before,  
 To mingle with the universe, and feel  
 What I can ne'er express, yet can not all conceal."

151. *Poetical Feet*.—Any regular succession of syllables is called a foot. Thus two syllables equally accented in immediate succession are called a spondee, but no entire verse could be made up of spondees.

"Painfully he rolled the stone  
 High up the hill."

A short or unaccented syllable, and a long or accented syllable immediately following, make an iambus.

An anapest consists of three syllables, the last being accented.

A trochee consists of two syllables, the first being accented.

A dactyl consists of three syllables, the first being accented.

The iambus and anapest may be used promiscuously, as they sound alike.

Also the trochee and dactyl may be interchanged for each other.

A short pause is required by the ear at the close of every line of verse, if it is written properly, even though the grammatical sense does not require it.

Also somewhere in a long line, generally near the middle, a pause is required by the melody, called a *cæsural* pause.



All the principles of verse are laid down and illustrated in elementary treatises on grammar, and it is not deemed necessary in this work to dwell minutely upon them.

152. *Various Kinds of Verse.*—Verse is divided into various kinds, according to the kind of foot principally or solely employed. Thus we have iambic, trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic verse.

The iambic measure is the most common, and when each line has five iambic feet, or at most five with a short syllable added, it is said to be in the heroic measure.

“Him first to love, great right and reason is,  
Who first to us our life and being gave;  
And after, when we facèd had amiss,  
Us wretches from the second death did save.”

An Alexandrine verse consists of six iammbuses, as follows:

“A needless Alexandrine ends the song,  
Which, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.”

Trochaic, anapestic, and dactylic verse respectively, consist of the feet indicated by the name. We give specimens of the three kinds successively:

“Count me o’er earth’s chosen heroes; they were souls that stood alone,  
While the men they agonized for, hurled the contumelious stone,  
Stood serene, and down the future saw the golden beam incline,  
To the side of perfect justice, master’d by their faith divine,  
By one man’s plain truth to manhood and to God’s supreme design.”

“What a mercy is this! What a heavenly bliss!  
How unspeakably happy am I!  
Gathered into the fold, with thy people enrolled,  
With thy people to live and to die.”

“Cling to the crucified!  
 His death is life to thee!  
 Life for eternity:  
 His pains thy pardon seal,  
 His stripes thy bruises heal,  
 His cross proclaims thy peace,  
 Bids every sorrow cease,  
 His blood is all to thee:  
 Cling to the crucified!”

153. *Various Metres*.—The mingling of these various measures, and the employment of verses of various lengths, and stanzas varying in the number of their verses, give us the numberless metres or kinds of versification actual and possible.

Many more are employed in modern times than were known to the ancients, and some that were much used in former times are now almost wholly neglected.

154. *Hexameter Verse*.—The hexameter verse, in which the *Iliad* of Homer and the *Æneid* of Virgil were written, was the kind most prized by the Greeks and Romans for the most dignified, elevated poetry. For a long time it was thought to be incompatible with the accent of the English language, but of late some good English hexameters have been written. Still it is in English an exotic, not “to the manner born,” and, except for short productions, not likely to command the interest of many readers. We give a specimen from Longfellow:

“Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,  
 Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks and pursuing  
 Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,  
 Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;

So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,  
Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing asunder,  
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,  
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other."

155. *The Sonnet*.—Some of the most elegant and labored short poems have been in the form called a Sonnet. The following is a good specimen, from J. Blanco White :

"Mysterious Night ! when our first parent knew  
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,  
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,  
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?  
Yet 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus, with the host of heaven, came,  
And lo ! creation widened in man's view.  
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun ? or who could find,  
Whilst fly, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,  
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind ?  
Why do we, then, shun death with anxious strife ?  
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life ?"

156. *Rhyme*.—Rhyme is the correspondence in the sound of the terminating syllables of two lines in immediate succession, or not far removed from each other. Sometimes certain other syllables in two lines immediately succeeding each other correspond in sound, or constitute rhyme. This is by some said to be a modern invention, simply because the ancient Greek and Latin poets did not employ it, but it was employed in the Sanscrit and other early Asiatic literature long before the Christian era.

157: *Alliteration*.—Alliteration, or the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of successive words, has been used as an ornament in poetry, but never to

so great an extent as rhyme, and, except to a very limited extent, it is regarded as of no value. Pope frequently employed it, as in this line :

“Up the high hill he heaved a huge round stone.”

Alliteration was very common in the old English ballads. The following verses from “The Marriage of Sir Gawaine” may be taken as a specimen :

“Kinge Arthur lives in merry Carleile,  
And seemely is to see,  
And there he hath with him Queene Guenever,  
That bride soe bright of blee.  
“And there he hath with him Queene Guenever,  
That bride soe bright in bowre,  
And all his barons about him stode  
That were both stiffe and stowre.”

Rhymes and alliterations are often mingled in modern poetry. The following verse employs both :

“Three kings there are to rule the world, and mightier none could be ;  
Howe’er he strive, no man alive, from their control is free.  
And one is yellow, and one is black, and one is white as snow—  
The yellow one is the elder one, but not the stronger though—  
By these and theirs the world’s affairs are rigorously controlled ;  
And the names these mighty monarchs bear are Cotton, Coal, and  
Gold.”

158. *Verse without true Poetry.*—We have spoken of Verse thus far as a dress assumed by Poetry ; but it is oftener employed when the thought expressed is not poetical. Measured language is itself pleasing to the ear, and, especially when accompanied with rhyme, is more easily remembered than prose. It is therefore employed sometimes to express almost every variety of thought. Verse is often used as a mnemonic, for

the expression of facts which it is convenient always to have at command. Nearly all are familiar with the stanza :

“Thirty days has September—  
April, June, and November:  
All the rest have thirty-one,  
Excepting February alone,  
Which has eight above a score,  
But in leap-year has one more.”

Attempts have been made to express in verse the rules of grammar and logic, and the leading facts in geography, but it is found that a healthy memory rejects a large quantity of mere jingle, that adds nothing to the naked facts.

159. *Poetry used as synonymous with Verse.* — Still by a very natural metonymy, the usual *form* of poetry, verse, stands for the substance in popular usage. Whately says: “Notwithstanding all that has been said by some French critics to prove that a work, not in metre, may be a poem (which doctrine was partly derived from a misinterpretation of a passage in Aristotle’s poetics), universal opinion has always given a contrary decision.”\*

Poetry, as usually understood, includes all literary productions which are in the form of measured language or verse, and excludes all others.

It is evident from this definition that poetry never reveals its full power but when read aloud, with proper intonation and emphasis.

Children take great delight in verse, showing that there is a natural passion for measured language.

\* Whately’s Rhetoric, part iii. chap. iii. § 3.

"Mother Goose's Melodies," and other juvenile literature, illustrate this fact.

160. *Importance of correct Measure.*—All writers of correct Poetry in any form of verse should observe faithfully the laws of versification. Imperfect measure and faulty rhymes may indeed be found in some good poems, but young writers should not be excused for employing them.

161. *Nonsensical Verse.*—One of the greatest faults in poetry, so called, is the presentation of a body without any soul—a mere pleasing combination of sounds, with little meaning. This kind of composition is well illustrated in the following lines :

"How evanescent and marine  
Are thy chaotic uplands seen,  
Oh, ever sublapsarian moon ;  
A thousand viaducts of light  
Were not so spherically bright  
Or ventilated half so soon.  
  
"And now again my bark is tost  
Upon the raging holocaust  
Of that acidulated sea ;  
And diapasons, pouring down,  
With lunar caustic join, to drown  
My transcendental epopee."

Much so-called poetry has but little more sense than this.

## CHAPTER XVIII

## SPECIES OF POETRY.

162. *Various Kinds of Poetical Composition.*—THERE are several leading kinds of poetry, among which may be mentioned as most important, the Lyric, the Epic, the Dramatic, and the Humorous.

163. *Lyric Poetry.*—Lyric Poetry embraces all that is written to be sung, and which may be accompanied by a musical instrument, as odes, hymns, songs.

These are usually brief, and each one should express at least one leading thought, and inspire at least one passion. They are not always written to be sung, and may be of such a metre that it would be difficult to accompany them with music.

Among them may be mentioned hymns, patriotic songs, love-songs, and odes on almost all subjects that inspire enthusiasm or unwonted emotion.

Hymns are confessedly among the most difficult compositions to write. The best examples in the world are some of the Psalms of David—psalms which in various languages have been sung for thousands of years, and will never be forgotten. Some of the hymns of Luther, Watts, Charles Wesley, and other Christian poets, may be regarded as models. The hymns best adapted to the public worship of God are not highly

imaginative and metaphorical, but rather in simple language expressive of the appropriate emotion. Extraordinary sentiment and artificial expressions tend to become displeasing by frequent repetition. Hence the difficulty of writing a hymn that shall be both expressive and popular. The metre too should be faultless.

What is called religious poetry is the most difficult to write well. Adoration, penitence, gratitude, love, and other religious emotions, blend with and employ the imagination, but it is not easy to express these emotions appropriately and forcibly, and at the same time not violate good taste. The highest culture finds here an appropriate field for exercise.

Patriotic songs are numerous, but how few have become popular! Generally they are either too simple or too abstruse, too prosaic or too artificial, to strike the heart of the people. The "Marseilles Hymn" inspires every true Frenchman with national pride. "God save the King!" seems to express the fervent prayer of every Englishman. The United States has no patriotic song universally popular. "Hail Columbia" is highly esteemed by many. The song beginning, "My Country, 'tis of thee," is a hymn, and in rhythm and force of thought deserves a high place. "Rally round the Flag" is deservedly popular. "The Star-spangled Banner" is only made popular by the beauty of the music connected with it.

The genius of the American people does not seem to exhibit itself in patriotic songs so much as in hymns. More of the people undoubtedly can sing several of our most popular religious hymns than any patriotic



song whatever. Though the tune of "Yankee Doodle" is known by all, it yet awaits a popular song, if indeed it is possible to construct a good song in such a measure.

Love-songs embrace some of the most finished and beautiful compositions in the language. Every affection of the heart may be expressed in this form. Indeed, Lyric Poetry has been more successfully cultivated lately than any other department. There is a good reason for this. The true region of Poetry is elevated above the ordinary tone of thought and feeling. The more intense the excitement, the shorter is the time during which it can be sustained. The best poems, therefore, are brief, and nearly all brief poems belong to the lyric class.

Odes embrace nearly all short poems except those kinds already mentioned. It would be vain to describe them, so countless is their variety. Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality in Childhood," Coleridge's "Address to Mount Blanc," Poe's "Song of a Raven" and his "Song of the Bells," Bryant's "Autumnal Days," Longfellow's "Excelsior," and Whittier's "Cry of a Lost Soul," and many other productions by these and other popular poets, belong to this class.

164. *Epic Poetry*.—Epic Poetry, in its perfection, embraces only certain long poems of a historic form, in which the personages whose actions are described are wholly or partly imaginary. Many poems have been written in this form, but nearly all have speedily fallen into oblivion.

The leading Epic Poems in the world are Homer's "Iliad," Virgil's "Æneid," Dante's "Divina Commedia," Camoen's "Lusiad," Tasso's "Jerusalem Delivered," and Milton's "Paradise Lost." To these may perhaps be added the famous "Niebelungen Lied," whose authorship is unknown, and Pollok's "Course of Time," though the former is read but little out of Germany, and the latter but little except by those people of England and the United States who prize it highly for its religious sentiment.

Some grand purpose gives character to an Epic Poem, and it has at least one leading hero, though by way of illustration and episode a great variety of themes and characters may be introduced. Often, what has been called "machinery," or supernatural characters, are introduced, such as gods and goddesses by the heathen poets, and angels and departed spirits by Christian poets. The poets gave form to the ancient mythology.

There are many long poems, not called epic, that nevertheless are similar in character. In all long poems, such as Young's "Night Thoughts," Montgomery's "World before the Flood," Cowper's "Task," Byron's "Childe Harold," Longfellow's "Hiawatha," Wordsworth's "Excursion," etc., extraordinary merit is necessary to sustain the interest. Indeed, long poems have but comparatively few readers, and there can be but little doubt that even the great epics of established fame are more eulogized than read.

165. *Dramatic Poetry*. — Dramatic Poetry is in the form of Dialogue, and is primarily designed to be recited

on the stage. The laws pertaining to this species of composition have already been given in the chapter on Representative Writing. Tragedy is noble in its character, endeavoring to illustrate some strong passion, and generally represents one or more of its characters struggling with difficulties external or internal, sometimes conquering and sometimes overcome. It deals with the strongest passions, and presents the sublimest thoughts. Comedy, on the other hand, is designed to excite mirth, sometimes contempt, and seldom rises to pathos or earnestness.

In a few instances both are blended in one composition.

A greater variety of measure is allowable in Dramatic than in Epic Poetry, and sometimes some of the characters speak in prose.

Many poems written in the form of the Drama were never designed for the theatre.

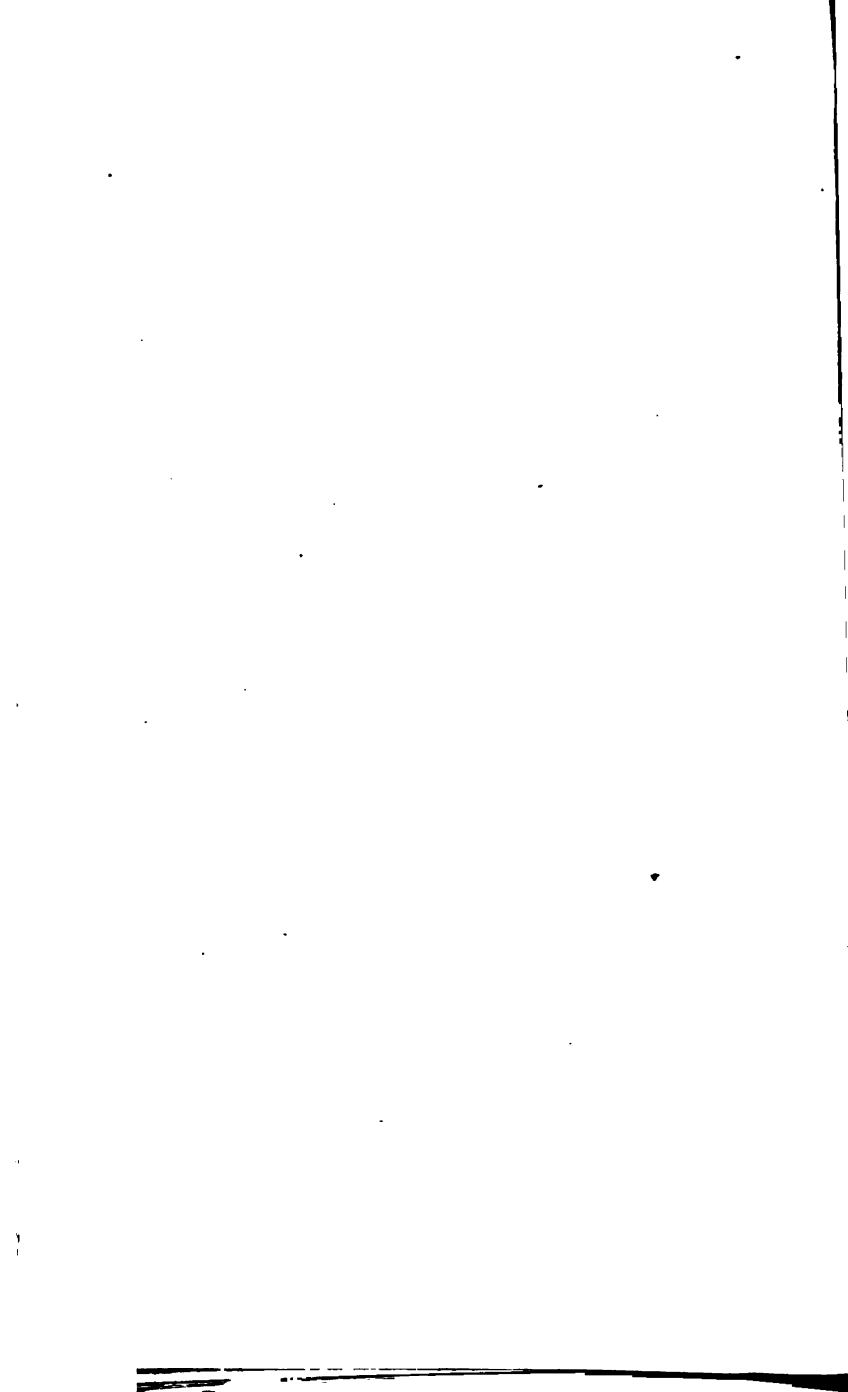
166. *Humorous Poetry*. — Humorous Poetry deals principally with wit. Every species of wit may be employed by the poet.

Sometimes the object of the poet seems to be only to produce laughter, by the strange combinations of thought presented. Sometimes the wit consists in ludicrous descriptions of laughable facts or groups of objects. Sometimes the strangeness of the metre and rhyme is itself witty. In this kind of writing the moderns immeasurably surpass the ancients.

Some of the best specimens of this kind of composition may be found in the writings of Thomas Hood, O. W. Holmes, and Alfred Saxe.

167. *The Ear should be cultivated.* — The language of Poetry is pre-eminently addressed to the ear, and therefore to be fully appreciated it should be read aloud, with proper accent and emphasis.

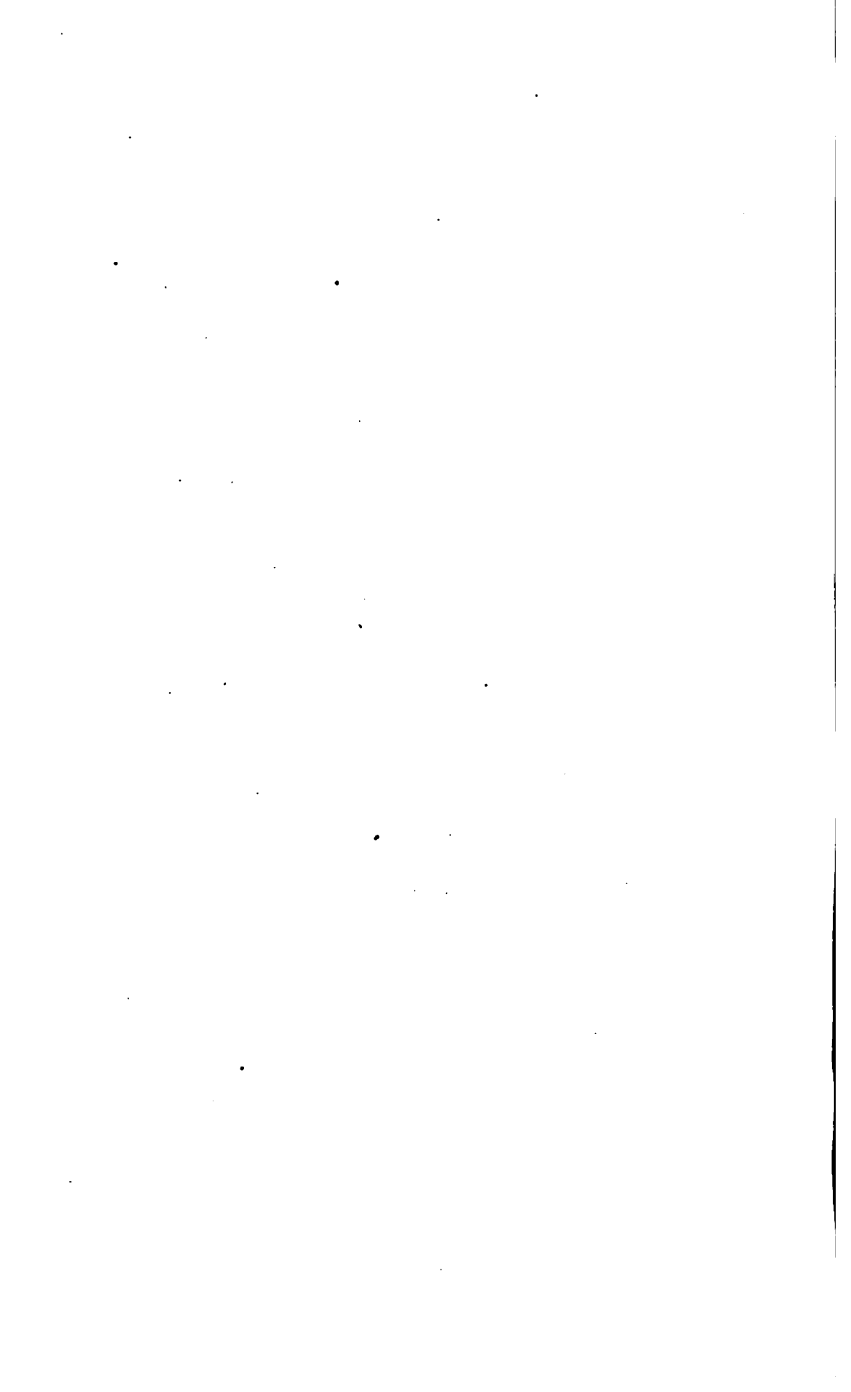
168. *Advantages of writing Verse.* — Every young writer should exercise himself thoroughly in writing various kinds of verse. It is the best kind of gymnastics for writers. It leads to searching for proper and expressive words. In all instances perfect correctness in measure and rhyme should be sought.



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**PART IV.**  
**INVENTION.**

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## CHAPTER I.

## NATURE OF INVENTION, AND SOME GENERAL RULES.

1. *Definition.*—INVENTION in Rhetoric is, primarily, the process by which an author obtains the material to be used, and devises and perfects the forms which he will employ to accomplish his purpose.

Invention, secondarily, teaches how to choose subjects upon which to speak or write, how to gather material, and how to execute his purposes with it.

2. *Mill's Description of Invention.*—John Stuart Mill, in his excellent work on Logic,\* states the truth on this subject forcibly, so far as it applies to Induction. The same principle applies to all Invention.

“Invention, though it can be cultivated, can not be reduced to rule; there is no science which will enable a man to bethink himself of that which will suit his purpose. But when he *has* thought of something, science will tell him whether that which he has thought of will suit his purpose or not.”

We may add here, that there is no science which will teach a man how to form a purpose. He must have that spontaneously, or growing out of circumstances—which may be to prove a truth, to disseminate a doctrine, to produce a conviction, to lead to or prevent some action, or to amuse, etc. But when the purpose is formed, and what will suit his purpose is

\* Vol. i. p. 311 (London, 1856).



suggested to his mind, both may be matured and perfected by science. Mr. Mill adds :

“The inquirer or arguer must be guided by his own knowledge and sagacity in the choice of his inductions out of which he will construct his argument. But the validity of the argument, when constructed, depends on principles, and must be tried by tests which are the same for all inquiries.”

According to the same principle we may add, that the propriety of using any figure of speech, any particular mode of composition, must be decided, consciously or unconsciously, properly or improperly, by the laws of Rhetoric.

3. *Rules can not exhaust the Subject.*—It is plainly impossible to lay down rules upon this subject that shall embrace it entirely, for genius is ever striking out new paths. On this account, probably, many treatises on Rhetoric omit the subject of Invention entirely, and others make no attempt to present what can be of any practical value.

We present a few general rules which should guide in Invention.

4. *The First Rule.*—*The writer or speaker should in all cases, before proceeding to his work, form a definite idea of what he intends to accomplish.*

It may be that his circumstances already give him a specific purpose. Is he called upon to defend a certain proposition, to advocate a certain project, to describe a certain object, or to accomplish any other specific end? His powers of invention will at once be aroused and directed by that act.

If he has no definite end in view except simply to

write an article or make an address, then his first purpose must be arbitrarily to choose a theme. Let him decide what object he will determine to accomplish, whether to instruct, to encourage, to dissuade, or to amuse, or perhaps several of these. Then let him choose a theme. Having chosen a theme, let him adhere to it and accomplish his purpose. The worst habit for a speaker or writer to form, is the habit of retreating from tasks once entered upon. There is no conceivable theme upon which a good article may not be written. The choice of a subject for a special purpose may indeed be faulty, and if so should be changed; at the same time more depends on the genius, study, and industry of the author, than upon the theme.

5. *The Second Rule.* — Having determined in what general form the subject shall be discussed—whether to describe something, or to prove something, or to rebut some falsehood, or simply to please—the writer should collect information, and thoughts, and facts, and illustrations bearing on the subject.

Some authors commit to writing these collections and preparations, made previous to the main work. Others simply impress them on the memory. Either practice may be carried to an extreme. If writing is solely relied upon, the memory is not duly strengthened; while, on the other hand, the pen, properly used, is the most efficient aid of the memory.

6. *What Use to make of the Works of others, and Plagiarism.*—It is often a matter of difficulty to a young writer to determine whether or not he should read the productions of others on the subject which he proposes

to discuss. If he reads what others have written, it tends to give shape and direction to his own thoughts, and it may be difficult for him to avoid the suspicion of plagiarism. Plagiarism is the stealing of the expressions, and especially the written productions, of another person, and passing them off as original. No one can be guilty of plagiarism and maintain any good degree of self-respect. Besides, the practice must weaken a writer's confidence in his own ability.

At the same time, thoughts first expressed by another, facts related by him, and even arguments presented by him, may be used without plagiarism. Illustrations may suggest other similar illustrations, arguments may suggest other similar arguments. There may be an original *combination* and application of old material.

Generally, the best method is to gather material of all kinds miscellaneously, before beginning to write, making notes or memoranda of the different thoughts, facts, and illustrations, that occur to the mind.

7. *The Third Rule.*—*A thorough plan or skeleton of the intended production should be drawn out, and amended till it is satisfactory, and this should be taken for a guide in completing the production.*

The principal part of the invention will be accomplished in selecting the subject, gathering the material, and constructing the plan. After this it will be comparatively easy to complete the structure.

8. *Remarks on the Choice of Subjects.*—The great difficulty which young writers have in choosing subjects of discourse, arises generally from a notion that the facts and experiences with which they have be-

come familiar are not sufficiently dignified and important to serve as themes, and they are therefore inclined to select some subject so remote from their own observation as not to furnish an adequate supply of material. No theme is too humble for one who exercises his power of observation and thought. Cowper wrote one of the best poems in the English language on *The Sofa*, and called it, "*The Task*." Barlow wrote an interesting poem on "*The Hasty Pudding*." To a mind stored with the requisite knowledge it would be as easy, and probably more pleasant, to write an essay on a piece of glass, or on an old nail, as on virtue, or vice, or the sun.

Let no writer be discouraged at the difficulty, at first, of gathering sufficient material upon the chosen theme. This is a difficulty to be overcome by study and practice, and has often been keenly felt in early efforts by those who have afterward become prolific writers and speakers. The power of continuous thought and expression is to be acquired only by practice.

It is impossible to become an able writer or speaker without much study.

## CHAPTER II.

## INVENTION IN DESCRIPTION.

IN the former parts of this book we have noticed various kinds of composition, to some of which we refer again, simply to show how material is gathered and used in actual composition.

The easiest and most natural themes are descriptive.

9. *Definition.*—Description is a presentation, in language, of some object as it exists, or is fancied to exist. Thus, for instance, a mountain, plain, river, lake, island, house, town, state, may be described. It is necessary first to obtain full and precise information about the subject. This may be obtained by seeking answers to such questions as, Where is it? How large?—considering all the dimensions applicable, as length, breadth, height, population, etc. For what is it peculiar? Is it used for any special purpose? How long has it existed, or been known? Are there other things of the kind near it, or suggested to the mind by it? Has any great event happened near it?

10. *Classification of Items.*—Having gathered all the information within reach upon the subject, and perhaps preserved the items in notes, or written memoranda, the next thing requisite is to *classify*, or *arrange* the

items which you wish to present, in their proper order, and then proceed to fill out the description.

The mind soon acquires the power thus of describing an object *fully* and *vividly*. Many men travel much and learn little; they read much and remember little; all for the want of methodically arranging the separate items which they see, in their proper relations.

11. *An Example of Descriptive Invention.*—Suppose, for instance, that it was proposed to write a description of Greece. The first business would be to collect information and thoughts, some of which would be already in the mind, and some of which would be found there only partially or incompletely. These thoughts should be jotted down on a piece of paper, preparatory to being wrought into an outline, or frame-work, and might present some such shape as this.

Greece was a small country.

It was mostly a group of islands and a narrow coast.

What were the main divisions?

Its climate was temperate but various.

Mountains, rivers, etc.

Were the people of one race?

Their primitive condition—barbarous.

Was Greece one nation?

Wars—foreign—intestine.

Slaves.

Their language, literature.

Philosophers—Socrates, Plato, Aristotle.

Military men—Leonidas, Alcibiades, etc.

Orators—Demosthenes.

Spartan character.

Modern Greece, etc.

These thoughts may now be systematically arranged, in an outline, thus:

1. The size and boundaries of Greece.
2. Peculiar geographical character and climate.

3. Character of the people in earliest times.
4. Homogeneity of people.
5. Divisions of people.
6. Their language and literature.
7. Their high culture, philosophers, etc.
8. Their character in war.
9. Modern Greece.

Then a description can be constructed: In uniting the parts, care must be taken not to show the seams too much, but by the use of connecting words and thoughts, let all be welded together into one symmetrical production. Sometimes, however, the transition between two thoughts is so abrupt that a new paragraph should be made. The final shape of the description might be something like this:

(1.) Greece is a name given to a small country in the south-eastern part of Europe, near Asia Minor, famous in ancient history. Its boundaries have not been always the same, but it may properly be said to include the whole of that peninsula between the Euxine and the Adriatic seas, and the islands in the immediate vicinity.

(2.) It is, to a great extent, a mountainous country, and is well watered by small rivers. The coast is lined with good harbors, and the people living in such a country must always have been practiced in navigation. The climate, too, is delightful, neither excessively hot nor cold, and the soil is very productive.

(3.) In the earliest times the people are said to have been barbarous, (4.) but they all spoke one language, or different dialects of one language, and became one of the most highly civilized peoples of antiquity. (5.) It is unfortunate, however, that they were divided into tribes or sections, sometimes intensely hostile to each other. They never, in fact, became one nation till their liberties were hopelessly lost.

(6.) The ancient Greeks were famous for their literature. Their language was rich and beautiful, and they have furnished to the world many of the ablest philosophers and orators. We need but mention Socrates, the martyr, Plato and Aristotle, as philosophers, and Demosthenes, the most famous of orators.

(7.) This people, though dwelling in so small a country, maintained themselves against all foes for many centuries, for they were extraordinarily brave and successful in war.

Modern Greece is an interesting country. The people are not so strong and remarkable as in ancient times, but they speak a similar language, and are very proud of the fame of their ancestors. All the civilized world would rejoice to see them equal and surpass, if possible, ancient Greece in its palmiest days.

We give this brief and simple specimen to show the process of Invention. Its laws are simple and uniform.

12. *Another Statement of the Process of Invention.*—First there must be a theme, around which thoughts will cluster. Second, the thoughts must be gathered. If already in the mind, they must be collated according to the laws of association, by which the memory works. If not all there, then the few thoughts which led to the selection of the theme must show the writer where to go, or what to do, to collect thoughts. Comparisons, metaphors, allusions, and all other figures of speech arising, must be noticed; if counted worthy or appropriate, they should be used. If not, let them be rejected.

13. *Importance of Thoroughness in acquiring Information.*—It is well to use the pen freely in gathering information. Sometimes a good writer will spend hours, and days, and even weeks, in collecting thoughts and illustrations on a subject, and then spend hours in arranging them into an outline, and finally write out the essay, or oration, or book, in a much shorter time than was spent collecting the material.

The great fault of young writers is that they do not learn to *invent*. They try to write or speak, with nothing to speak or write about. Gather abundant material first. Do not say that this is impossible. It is not so.



Would you write about the town or city in which you reside? Take a note-book and travel about the town, and make memoranda of what you see. Read what others have written about it, if you wish to. Seek comparisons, metaphors, etc., that you can appropriately use. You will probably surprise yourself, and your friends, by the abundance and accuracy of your information.

14. *Value of Descriptive Writing.*—Descriptions are the kind of productions upon which the young should write, until they acquire facility in the construction of outlines, and in filling them up. Sometimes speeches, dialogues, and other kinds of composition can be introduced, in the midst of descriptions.

15. *Common Themes may be chosen.*—In the selection of Themes it would be well not to slight common subjects near at hand. An old oak tree, or any other particular tree; a street, or square, or hotel, or factory, in the place where you live, would richly repay examination; and of course a long and minute examination must precede a description. Why do young writers, or indeed any but the best-informed minds, find it so difficult to describe the ocean, spring, summer, etc., the sun, the starry heavens? It is because they know so little about them. Why not select subjects that they do understand? No teacher of youth can fail to have noticed many aspiring young men who were very anxious to study elocution before they had any thing to speak about, and rhetoric, without laying the proper foundation.

16. *Opinions of Bacon upon the proper Time to study*

*Rhetoric.*—Lord Bacon, in his “*Advancement of Learning*,” Book I., says: “Scholars in universities come too soon and too unripe to logic and rhetoric, arts fitter for graduates than children and novices; for these two, rightly taken, are the gravest of sciences, being the art of arts; the one for judgment, the other for ornament; and they be the rules and directions how to set forth and dispose matter, and therefore for minds empty and unfraught with matter, and which have not gathered that which Cicero calleth *sylva* and *supellex*, stuff and variety, to begin with those arts (as if one should learn to weigh, or to measure, or to paint the wind), doth work but this effect, that the wisdom of those arts, which is great and universal, is almost made contemptible, and is degenerated into childish sophistry and ridiculous affectation.”

It does not follow that young pupils should not be trained to write and speak. It is an idle theory, and pernicious in its effects, to postpone all study of rhetoric till the conclusion of education—but early should all learn the fact, that *the collection of information, and of thought, is the greatest and most essential work of a writer and speaker.*

17. *Themes in Description.*—For practical exercise we subjoin a list of subjects upon which students may exercise their ingenuity, and would recommend that each person collect information and classify it in an outline or sketch, and complete an essay on at least two of the following themes. It would be well to write on all of them.

1. A Description of my Native State.

2. The Great American Desert.
3. The Mississippi Valley.
4. The Falls of Niagara.
5. The White Mountains.
6. The Gulf of Mexico.
7. Relics of Pre-historic Men in America.
8. Oak Trees.
9. The City of Washington.
10. The Supreme Court of the United States.
11. The largest Railway in the Country.
12. The Bible.
13. A Hive of Honey-bees.
14. Beavers and their Customs.
15. Ancient Babylon.
16. A Ship of War.
17. The Steam Engine.
18. The Pyramids.
19. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.

## CHAPTER III.

## INVENTION IN NARRATIONS.

18. *Definition.* — NARRATIONS embrace historical writings of every grade. The highest talent has found full scope in this kind of writing. It naturally follows, if indeed it does not accompany, Descriptions. Having described an object as it is at one moment, it is natural to describe the changes which it undergoes.

Narration deals principally with persons, though it embraces only actions and things.

19. *Laws of Invention applicable to Narrations.* — The laws of Invention with reference to Narration are, in principle, precisely the same as with reference to Description. In both, great care must be taken not to dwell too much on unimportant facts or objects, and not to neglect what is really essential. If a painter endeavors to crowd too much on the canvas, he confuses the attention and spoils the picture. Great skill can be acquired by practice in making a narrative vivid.

20. *Some Practical Directions.* — It is a profitable exercise to narrate occurrences in one's own history or under his own observation. Has the school with which he is connected had no history? Could he not learn a series of facts about it, by study, that would be in-

teresting to all? Why not write the history of the town for just ten years? It is well to read the history of some personage, take abundant notes, and then write out a sketch without once consulting the book during the writing.

In a previous part of the book we have spoken of the severe labor of some historians in gathering material and in forming their style. Some of them have spent many years, and many thousands of dollars, in what may be called the process of Invention—in finding, not making, the information, and in originating and preparing the illustrations which they employed. *The gathering of material is the most important part of the work of a writer or speaker.*

In arranging the material he may follow the chronological order of events, if he pleases, or he may arrange what he has to say so as to prove some one principle, and neglect all the facts that do not apply to that, or he may select some one prominent character and make all the events cluster about him.

21. *A Specimen of Invention in Description from Macaulay.*—As a specimen of life-like narrative, we give a brief extract from Macaulay, in which he commences the relation of the great trial of Lord Hastings. We have no means of knowing whether he previously formed an outline of this narrative or not, but if not written, it must have existed in his mind, in some such form as this:

1. The place. What had happened before in this great hall.
2. Surrounding circumstances—military pomp—the peers—royalty, etc.
3. The galleries—ladies—queen, etc.

4. How Hastings looked—little man—a great man, etc.
5. The trial. Burke's speech—its effect. The impeachment.

We give now a few paragraphs of Lord Macaulay's filling out of this sketch.

"The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus; the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings; the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon, and the just absolution of Somers; the hall where the eloquence of Stafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with a just resentment; the hall where Charles had confronted the high court of justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame.

"Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under the garter king-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state, attended to give advice on points of law. Near a hundred and seventy lords, three-fourths of the upper house, as the upper house then was, walked in solemn order from their usual place of assembling to the tribunal. \* \* \* \*

"The gray old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by such an audience as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous realm, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated around the queen the fair-haired daughters of the house of Brunswick."

Then follows a long description of Reynolds the painter, and Parr the classical scholar, and several other noted personages who were present—all of which shows the wondrous amount of information which Macaulay stored up on a subject before he began to write about it. He then adds:

"The sergeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, had made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself that all

had feared him, that most had loved him, and hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect; a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the great picture in the council-chamber, 'a mind calm amid difficulties.' Such was the aspect with which the great proconsul presented himself to the judges.

"The charges and the answers of Hastings were first read. This ceremony occupied two whole days, and was rendered less tedious than it otherwise would have been by the silver voice and just emphasis of Cowper, the clerk of the court, a near relative of the amiable poet.

"On the third day Burke rose."

After a long description of his speech and its effects, the narrative thus closes:

"At length the orator concluded. Raising his voice till the old arches of Irish oak resounded, 'Therefore,' said he, 'hath it with all confidence been ordered by the Commons of Great Britain, that I impeach Warren Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; I impeach him in the name of the Commons House of Parliament, whose trust he has betrayed. I impeach him in the name of the English nation, whose ancient honors he has sullied. I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose rights he has trodden under foot, and whose country he has turned into a desert. Lastly, in the name of human nature itself, in the name of both sexes, in the name of every age, in the name of every rank, I impeach the common enemy and oppressor of all."

22. *Remarks on the above Example.*—In examining carefully this, one of the most impressive narratives in the language, observe the fullness of information garnered up by the historian. He weaves in numerous little incidents and facts, and makes them all tell. How much he knows about the old hall! All who were present, their previous lives, the size of the galleries, the dress of the ladies, the appearance of the

motto under one of his pictures at Calcutta, and the words of Burke in making the impeachment—nothing escaped his eye, and all are marshalled in their proper order. Suppose he had undertaken to write a description, without first gathering the material—he would have done as feeble writers generally do, and succeeded no better.

23. *The Practice of Dr. Franklin.*—Dr. Benjamin Franklin made himself a correct and eloquent and prolific writer by following the course recommended above. In a letter dated Nov. 2, 1789, written to Benjamin Vaughan, he gives the following advice :

“What I would therefore recommend to you is, that before you sit down to write on any subject you would spend some days in considering it, putting down at the same time, in short hints, every thought which occurs to you as proper to make a part of your intended piece. When you have thus obtained a collection of the thoughts, examine them carefully with this view, to find which of them is properest to be presented *first* to the mind of the reader, that he, being possessed of that, may be better disposed to receive what you intend for the second ; and thus I would have you put a figure before each thought to mark its future place in your composition. For so every preceding composition preparing the mind for that which is to follow, and the reader often anticipating it, he proceeds with ease and pleasure and approbation, as seeming continually to meet his own thoughts. In this mode you have a chance for a perfect production ; because, the mind attending first to the sentiments alone, next



to the method alone, each part is likely to be better performed, and, I think, too, in less time."

24. *Subjects for Exercise.*—We subjoin a list of subjects for practice in narrative.

1. The Discovery of America by Columbus.

2. The Landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

3. The Detection, Trial, and Execution of Major Andre.

4. The Passage of the Declaration of Independence, in 1776.

5. The Battle of Waterloo.

6. The Death and Funeral of Abraham Lincoln.

7. The Battle of Bunker Hill.

8. The Burning of Moscow.

9. The Discussion between Hayne and Webster in the American Senate.

10. The Salem Witchcraft.

11. The Battle of New Orleans.

## CHAPTER IV.

## INVENTION IN ABSTRACT SUBJECTS.

25. *Difficulty in the Investigation of Abstract Subjects.*

—WHEN we pass from subjects that may be denominated external, the facts concerning which are obtained by an exercise of the senses, to those of a purely mental character, we enter a range of thought which is developed later in life, and not very largely, except in those who acquire a liberal education, either by special effort or as the result of their occupation.

26. *Requisites for Invention on such Subjects.* — The great requisite is close and connected thought upon the subject; and the proper methods of thought are taught, not in a Rhetoric, but in the sciences respectively that embrace the subject. How could one write or speak extensively or vigorously on memory, mental association, volition, or any such theme, who had not studied Mental Philosophy? How could one treat in a masterly manner such a subject as electricity, mechanical motion, or machinery, who had not studied Natural Philosophy? How could one write or speak ably upon food, poisons, health, disease, diet, who had not investigated Physiology? How could one write an able dissertation on insanity, or idiocy, who did

not understand both Physiology and Mental Philosophy? Ignorance is the great foe of efficiency. Abundant knowledge is the exhaustless fountain of a good speaker or writer. That the fountain should be exhaustless, streams must run inward as well as outward. There must be faithful, constant industry. Invention can not create raw material, and raw material is always used up by actual labor.

27. *More than Information necessary.*—Still there are some men, encyclopædic in information, who can not command their resources and put their information into shape, and this is often the result of not knowing *how* to use information, so as to bring it to bear on an end in view.

28. *Practical Directions.*—In considering a subject, it is well to inquire first, *where* it resides, *how far* it extends, *how long* it has existed. Then, how great is its power. Is it useful or pernicious? If both, when and why is it the one, and when and why the other? Is it often confounded with some other subject? If so, what, and why, and how? Has it any special application to any end you have now in view? Is it connected with human conduct? Can you make it appear attractive, or disagreeable, by any comparisons or illustrations? Is there any method by which you can in the prosecution of the subject appeal to the passions of your hearers?

These are but a few of the many questions that a writer may bear in mind when he is collecting information and thoughts, and arranging them, preparatory to the construction of his production.

29. *Example.*—Let the abstract theme, patriotism, for instance, be selected as the subject of an essay, and examined according to the above questions, and an outline like the following could be constructed.

#### PATRIOTISM.

Patriotism, or the love of one's own country, is nearly if not quite a universal passion.

It has been manifested from the earliest times [Hebrews, Grecians, Romans, French, Swiss, English, Americans—or any others].

Its power, as evinced in war, in diplomacy. Even among savages. [Look up some instances in history to illustrate this.]

Its good effects in leading every nation to try to excel.

Show some bad effects when not regulated. [Cæsar crossing the Rubicon. Napoleon's campaigns in Russia and Egypt.]

True patriotism should not be confounded with *ambition*, nor with attempt to exalt a *part* of a nation over other *parts*. Speak of rebellion and civil war.

Compare it to love for members of the same family—to coherence of the parts of one structure together, as of a house—to the union between different organs of the same body—to the blood circulating through the body giving life to the whole, etc.

Refer to monuments erected to honor brave patriots and useful men and women, by nations. Find some, and give the inscriptions on them.

Show how one may feel and manifest patriotism in peace, as well as in war. Was Franklin a patriot? Was Howard a patriot? etc.

Close with an application of the subject to present circumstances.

30. *The Writer should invent new Modes in the Presentation of Subjects.*—It is not well for a writer or speaker to confine himself to any model in forming a plan of his production. But the above will show that the questions recommended will put the mind upon a track that will be likely to lead to a thorough treatment of a theme.

31. *A List of Subjects for Practice.*—We subjoin a brief list of abstract subjects in which the student can

exercise his powers of invention. In all cases let a full outline be prepared, and give much attention to the collection of information and illustrations.

1. The Power and Abuses of Faith.
2. The Effects of Labor.
3. A Republican Form of Government.
4. The Invention and Use of Steam-power.
5. Moral Courage.
6. The English Language.
7. The Magnetic Telegraph.
8. The Missionary Enterprise.
9. The Power of Music.
10. The Effects of War.
11. Ancient and Modern Oratory.
12. The Importance of Restraining the Passions.
13. Mental Refinement.
14. Radicalism.
15. Value of Health.
16. Power of Heat.
17. Military Ambition.
18. Enthusiasm.

## CHAPTER V.

## INVENTION IN DISCUSSIONS.

32. *Prevalence of Discussions.*—MUCH of the writing and speaking of men in actual life is argumentative, and a large part of this is discussion in courts, or deliberative or legislative bodies. Even when an address is made, or a sermon is preached, very frequently it is argumentative, attempting to prove what is known to be disputed, and it partakes, therefore, of the character of a discussion, in which one party only is present. It becomes a matter of great importance to know how most efficiently to investigate a subject upon which diverse opinions are entertained.

33. *The First Requisite in a Discussion.*—In a discussion, the first requisite is a clear understanding of the question at issue. Many questions are so loosely and ambiguously stated that no thorough discussion of them is possible. Disputants, even defending the same side, are not considering the same subject, and may be diametrically opposed to each other. When duty requires the discussion of any such proposition, an effort should be made to show the ambiguity or incoherency of the theme, and to put it into definite shape, and determine just what you propose to affirm, and what you

propose to deny. A critically correct use of language is essential to the proper statement and enforcement of truth.

34. *Discussions nevertheless possible, with a clear understanding of Terms.* — Some questions are answered by strict definition, but there are many questions upon which a diversity of opinion exists, and upon which there may be profitable discussion even though both parties understand the terms in the same sense.

35. *Example.* — Suppose, for instance, the question arises, as it often has before legislative, and judicial, and military bodies: Shall duelling be regarded as murder? It is necessary first to define duelling accurately, so as to distinguish it from ordinary quarrelling, even though with an intention to kill; from assault and battery; from a malicious plotting secretly to take the life of another; and the element of the voluntary exposure of both parties to death must not be left out of account. Then murder must be defined with equal care. If both parties can agree on the definitions, it is well; if not, each party must endeavor to show that his view of the meaning of the question is correct, and carry conviction on that point to his hearers, if possible. Should an agreement exist on the meaning of the terms, there would still be room, on this subject, for a discussion that would involve many nice and profound investigations in morals, politics, and religion.

It is the province of logic, not of rhetoric, to classify the kinds of argumentation. To find or invent

arguments, no rule can be given. It is the product of pure thought. An understanding of the subject implies their existence.

36. *The Second Rule in Discussions.* — The second rule in discussion is to endeavor to survey, as widely and thoroughly as possible, all the arguments you can command on the question, both for and against the proposition which you intend to maintain, *before you construct your own brief, or order of argumentation.*

Feeble reasoners plunge into a discussion before they have surveyed the other side. The consequence is that they are often surprised and confounded and overwhelmed by opposition, which, if they had anticipated it and thoroughly surveyed it, might easily have been removed. It would be well even to make out an outline of the arguments on both sides of the question, and then espouse and defend what you know to be right.

37. *The Third Rule.* — It is proper to take advantage of passions, temperaments, circumstances, and even prejudices, to conciliate the favor of opponents, and to enlist the attention of the audience, provided that no falsehood be maintained.

Arguments, therefore, should be skillfully and artistically arranged. If there is some one consideration that, though true and weighty, your audience will not listen to, or duly examine, keep it back till you have conciliated their approval. If there is a feeble argument that nevertheless has here superior influence, bring it into the foreground.

In the general, strong arguments should be used



first, and the very strongest perhaps last, to leave a profound impression upon the mind.

If questionable arguments are to be employed, let it be distinctly understood that the conclusion is not to be based on them, so that, if refuted, the cause is not lost.

38. *The Burden of Proof.*—In all practical discussions it is well primarily to determine with which side “the burden of proof” lies. If a *change* in action is advocated, the burden of proof, or the necessity of making out his case, lies with the affirmative; the contestant has nothing to prove but the falsity or weakness of the arguments adduced in favor of change. Every man is to be esteemed innocent till shown to be guilty. The burden of proof is with the complainant. No one should allow himself to be required to prove what need not be proved to sustain his cause.

39. *Allowance to Opponents.*—In refutation, a truly strong reasoner, who is confident of right, and confident of a mastery of his subject, can afford to allow all that is undeniably true in the statements of his opponent; but he will carefully separate the true from the false, and show that the acknowledgment of the one does not carry with it the other.

40. *Personal Abuse.*—The personal abuse of an opponent, however common in feeble reasoners, and however many examples of it may be found even of a high character, should not be resorted to. It almost always betrays a want of confidence in the righteousness of a cause, and seldom aids in producing conviction. The habit of offensive personalities in debate

almost invariably weakens the influence of an orator.

41. *Example of Invention in Discussion.*—To show how the mind works in inventing argumentation let us look at an actual instance, instead of undertaking a description of the theory. In 1829 a debate arose in the United States Senate, on a subject upon which opinions seemed to be nearly equally divided, and which was postponed without decision, after calling forth several able speeches. Let us notice briefly how the senators “invented” or formed and arranged their arguments on this occasion. The question in dispute was, whether a committee should “inquire into the expediency of limiting for a period the sales of public lands to such as had already been offered for sale, and of abolishing the office of surveyor-general.” Although nearly half of the members participated in the discussion, and many days were spent upon it, the chief interest centres in the speeches of Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina, and Senator Daniel Webster of Massachusetts. Mr. Hayne advocated the proposed resolution by asserting, (1.) The importance of the public land question—it deserved investigation; (2.) There were two great parties in the country on the subject—one favoring giving lands to actual settlers, and the other desiring to make money by their sale, and this party oppressed actual settlers; (3.) The nation had been too niggardly and oppressive to settlers hitherto, and especially the Northern States were open to this charge; (4.) Obtaining a fund by the sale of lands would lead to extravagance and corruption; (5.)

Selling the public lands would consolidate the States too much and destroy the independence of the separate States ; (6.) Finally, some way should be ascertained to arrest threatened evils.

These propositions were expanded into an impressive speech of more than an hour.

Mr. Webster, in reply, was aided in his invention of arguments by the course already pursued, as it was his purpose to weaken the effect of Mr. Hayne's arguments. An abstract of his speech may thus be drawn up : (1.) A denial of the importance of the inquiry, because all who needed land could purchase it cheaply. (2.) A denial that any party had advocated an oppression of new settlers. (3.) An assertion that the nation asked for its lands only enough to pay for the actual expense of surveying them and protecting the settlers. (4.) An assertion that the present system led to the rapid growth of new and prosperous States. (5.) That there was an actual compact entered into by which the proceeds of lands sold were to be devoted to the payment of the national debt. (6.) It was necessary that the nation should be consolidated. (7.) A defense of the course pursued by the Northern States with reference to the West.

These arguments were expanded into an eloquent speech of about two hours in length.

To this Mr. Hayne rejoined in a speech that was thought at the time to be overwhelming and unanswerable. Much of a personal character was mingled with the debate, but the leading propositions of the speech were as follows :

(1.) An assertion that Mr. Webster had adroitly changed the subject of debate, and had made against the South a false charge of injustice toward the Western States ; (2.) That his present doctrine was inconsistent with what he had formerly maintained ; (3.) That his doctrine that the wild lands were the property of the nation was inconsistent with his willingness, elsewhere shown, to vote for giving portions of them for the building of roads, constructing canals, and other internal improvements ; (4.) That the friendliness of the North with the West was the result of a corrupt political bargain ; (5.) That the Southern States were unjustly traduced ; (6.) That his State had shown singular devotion to the Union, while men in Massachusetts had plotted against the country ; and (7.) That the doctrines which he proclaimed had been advocated by the fathers.

This somewhat meagre skeleton was clothed with such earnest, fervid appeal and profuseness of illustration as to create a deep impression. •

The rejoinder of Daniel Webster is perhaps the most eloquent, certainly it is the most celebrated oration ever delivered in the American Senate. It ranks with the master-pieces of oratory in ancient and modern times. Like the oration of Demosthenes on the Crown, its occasion seemed trivial, but really it embraced in its range the great subjects of dissension between the rival systems of civilization in this country. The oration deserves to be studied as a model. The impress of genius is on every paragraph. The introduction was novel and striking :

"MR. PRESIDENT.—When the mariner has been tossed for many days in thick weather, and on an unknown sea, he naturally avails himself of the first pause in the storm, the earliest glance of the sun, to take his latitude, and ascertain how far the elements have driven him from his true course. Let us imitate this prudence, and, before we float farther on the waves of this debate, refer to the point from which we departed, that we may at least be able to conjecture where we now are. I ask for the reading of the resolution before the Senate."

No summary of the arguments which followed would do justice to the subject. It was severely argumentative, rhetorically beautiful. Not a paragraph, not a sentence, scarcely a word is superfluous. The peroration is one of the most eloquent passages ever uttered.

Though a summary of the leading thoughts of the oration can give no adequate idea of its power, yet to show how simple and yet logical the frame-work was, upon which the structure was built, we give the leading thoughts.

After the exordium, given above, and the reading of the resolution, Mr. Webster stated, (1.) The main subject had been neglected by his opponent, and all who had advocated the other side of the question. They had wandered widely, and brought in much that was totally irrelevant. (2.) He repelled all personal attacks on himself, in the course of which he quoted some remarks of his opponent, and used them so as to show his own real or assumed superiority of purpose. (3.) He then vindicated his section of the country from the charges made against it, in the course of which he adroitly used some allusions made by his opponent, so as to turn their force against him. A long historical

argument is here introduced. (4.) He repelled and disproved the alleged "corrupt political bargain." (5.) He denied any prejudice or unfairness toward the South. (6.) He then advocated a liberal policy toward the new States, and entered into a long constitutional argument that can not well be condensed. (7.) He closed with an eloquent plea for the permanency of the Union.

This admirable oration was not written in full till after it was pronounced. It was, however, the result of long and careful study, the author having frequently presented all the arguments and facts in previous discussions, and in conversation, and could never have been invented but by a man thoroughly conversant with the subject, and one who had disciplined himself to accuracy of thought and expression by long and severe practice. Besides, the oration is instinct with genius in all its parts.

42. *Exercises in Invention in Discussion.*—Draw up an abstract of arguments on both sides of each of the following questions, and arrange the arguments so as to make the strongest possible impression. Then show your reasons, in conclusion, for preferring that side which you believe to be correct.

Which are more valuable to a country, navigable rivers or railways?

Is life in the city or country preferable?

Should the sale of intoxicating drinks for a beverage be prohibited by law?

Was the purchase of Alaska by the United States of America a wise measure?

Ought parents to be compelled by law to give their children (unless sickness prevents) a certain amount of literary education?

Ought the printing and sale of bad books to be forbidden by law?

Which was the greater man, Washington or Napoleon?

Which did the most for his country, Franklin or Washington?

Have wars been productive of greater good or evil?

Is the civilized preferable to the savage state?

Ought the right of suffrage in a republic to be limited by an educational provision?

Are newspapers, on the whole, productive of good or evil?

Is a hilly and mountainous country preferable to one that is level?

Have we reason to expect as great improvements in the useful arts during the next hundred years as during the past hundred?

Was Demosthenes the greater orator, or Webster?

Is the sense of sight of more value to man than the sense of hearing?

Do savage nations possess a full right to the soil?

Is the world advancing in mental and moral character?

Which should the Government encourage, commerce or manufactures?

## CHAPTER VI.

## INVENTION IN MISCELLANEOUS PRODUCTIONS.

43. *General Principles.*—THE general principles of Invention will be easily seen from what has already been stated. To invent addresses, essays, criticisms, letters, dialogues, tales, poems, select the best models and study them, gather material, arrange, reject, modify, and improve it, until a satisfactory outline is made, and then patiently complete the work. Practice alone makes perfect.

44. *Invention in Style.*—This also should be sedulously cultivated. No one should be contented with a fair mastery of one style. His own most natural and efficient style will be improved by attempting many others. Let the writer who finds all his sentences short and crispy, by sheer resolution write some long and periodic sentences. Let the writer who finds the use of metaphors unnatural, seek out comparisons and invent metaphors, however tedious the effort.

45. *How Invention is acquired.*—The art of Invention can not be learned from a text-book. Science teaches only how to use material already existing. The student who forms the habit of reading with his pencil in hand, and who frequently expresses what thoughts he has on paper, will not long need to study the art of Invention. Severe study and abundant prac-



tice, with the special object of self-improvement, are indispensable to the highest success; but in the business of actual life, when writing and speaking cease to be an end, but are employed as a means, then one must be able to forget himself, to forget rule (except so far as not outrageously to violate it), and aim only to accomplish his main purpose.

46. *Whately's Advice*. — Dr. Whately has well remarked :

“ The safest rule is, never, during the act of composition, to study elegance, or think about it at all. Let an author study the best models—mark their beauties of style and dwell upon them, that he may insensibly catch the habit of expressing himself with elegance; and when he has completed any composition, he may revise it, and cautiously alter any passage that is awkward and harsh, as well as those that are feeble and obscure; but let him never, *while writing*, think of any beauties of style, but content himself with such as may come spontaneously.”

The secret of efficient speaking is, first, to have something to say, and second, to express it fully and exactly.

47. *Bolingbroke's Opinion*. — Though the sentiment has already been expressed, we give the opinion of Bolingbroke, who illustrated in his own life the power of eloquence. “ Eloquence,” he says, “ has charms to lead mankind, and gives a nobler superiority than power, that every dunce may use, or fraud, that every knave may employ. But eloquence must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout

forth like a frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year. The famous orators of Greece and Rome were the statesmen and ministers of those commonwealths. The nature of their governments, and the humor of those ages, made elaborate orations necessary. They harangued oftener than they debated; and the *ars dicendi* required more study and more exercise of mind, and of body too, among them, than are necessary among us. But as much pains as they took in learning how to conduct the stream of eloquence, they took more to enlarge the foundation from which it flowed."

48. *Milton's Opinion*.—We add a few weighty words from Milton:

"True eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of these things into others, when such a man would speak, his words, like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

49. *Examples for Practice*.—We subjoin a few subjects, simply as specimens, to write upon. Whatever subject be chosen, if, instead of the vain attempt to write at once, without thought, suitable efforts be made to collect information, an interest will be aroused which will make it comparatively easy to write.

Letter to a Friend describing a severe Snow-storm.

Letter describing a severe Drought.

Letter describing a Fire.

Address to a Popular Assembly on Universal Education.

Speech in Favor of a more reasonable Observance of the Sabbath.

Lecture on the Art of Printing.

Anniversary Address on the 4th of July.

Oration on Washington, for February 22d.

Oration on Christianity in America.

An Anecdote.

Journal of a Week's Residence at Home.

Journal of a Week's Travel.

Description of a Presidential Inauguration.

A Review of "The Pilgrim's Progress."

A Book Notice of a new Edition of "Robinson Crusoe."

Utility of such a Book as "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments."

Letter to the N. Y. *Day Star* (a newspaper) describing a Revolution in Mexico.

Letter from one of a Party saved from Shipwreck.

Communication to a Paper describing a great Flood.

Description of an Accident on a Railway.

Dialogue between a Republican and a Monarchist.

Dialogue between a Farmer and a Lawyer.

North and South America compared.

An Allegory : The European Sisters (Nations).

An Allegory : Contest between the Virtues and the Vices.

Contrast between Ancient Greece and Modern China.

Impulse and Principle.

New England and Old England.

Effects of the Discovery of America.

Proceedings of a Public Meeting called to consider the propriety of building a new School-house.

Report of a Committee appointed to draft Resolutions at a Meeting held to prevent Intemperance.

A Petition addressed to the Legislature of this State for the enactment of a Law the more effectually to prevent Gambling.

Report of a Committee appointed to visit the Schools of this State, and to examine their Condition, and suggest what Improvements are needed.

Reform Schools: their Character and Usefulness.

The Magnetic Needle and the Bible.

The Telescope and the Microscope.

The Slavery of Evil Habits.

Prospects of the English Language.

The Chinese in America.

The Effects of Music and Painting compared.

Socrates and Franklin compared.

Importance of Agricultural Colleges.

A Poem: America in the 19th Century.

A Poem: The Last Red Man.

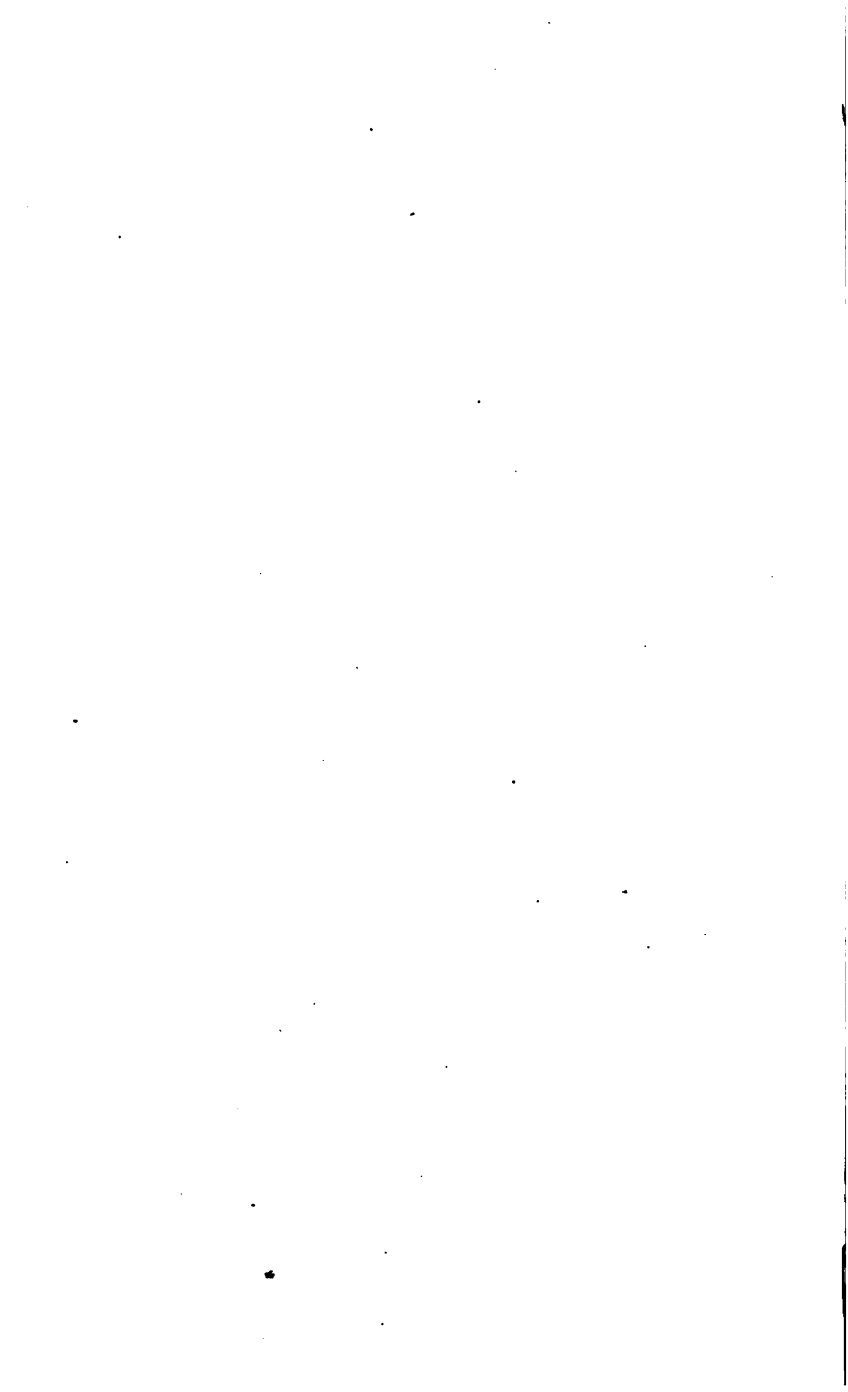
A Poem: The Submarine Telegraph.



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PART V.  
ELOCUTION.

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## CHAPTER I.

## PROPRIETY OF THE STUDY OF ELOCUTION.

1. *Definition.*—ELOCUTION teaches how most effectively to pronounce or speak any production, original or borrowed.

In a practical Rhetoric we are compelled often to observe the distinction between productions that are designed to be printed and read, and those which are designed to be spoken. The former must be written, the latter may be pronounced either with or without having been written.

2. *How to make a Production impressive.*—An author's interest in his productions does not usually cease with their creation; he desires to introduce them favorably. If they are to be printed, much depends on the vehicle chosen. Shall they be published as a book, or in some periodical? Shall they be illustrated by pictures? Shall they appear in an expensive or cheap form? A poor production may borrow a temporary popularity from an attractive dress, or from undeserved eulogy, and a meritorious work might sink into oblivion from an unfavorable presentation. The art of publishing, however, can not here be investigated. But Elocution, the art of speaking well, claims attention in a treatise on Rhetoric, and is intrinsically valuable.

3. *Opposite erroneous Views on the Power of Elocu-*



tion.—Before examining its elements, it may be well to expose an unworthy prejudice against it, and also to guard against extravagant ideas of its value.

Dr. Whately, in his *Rhetoric*, pronounces unqualified condemnation on all practical treatises on the subject, and on all modes of instruction adopted previous to his time, and contents himself with recommending a "natural manner of speaking," to be cultivated simply by private attention to the subject, aided by friendly criticisms. He expressly discountenances special efforts to cultivate the voice, and the recitation, from memory, of the productions of others.

On the other hand many seem to believe that oratory, in the highest sense, is easily within the reach of all; that men unqualified by previous culture, with a narrow range of thought, need only to study and practice "Elocution," to make themselves attractive and successful speakers. Also many already engaged in public speaking, but not meeting with the success which they anticipated, have studied Elocution a few weeks, perhaps under the direction of some uncultivated dogmatist, who promised to exhaust the subject of oratory in from six to twelve lessons, and not finding any increase in ability, are ready to coincide with Dr. Whately, in the opinion that the study is practically useless, if not pernicious. Both these extremes are absurd.

4. *Elocution is an Art*.—Elocution is, in fact, a complex art, based on inflexible science, and worthy of careful and exhaustive study. Elocution is impossible, or would be useless, without expression; expression is impossible, or would be useless, without

thought. Parrots may be trained to articulate, but speech is valueless without intellect and heart. Good declaimers of the productions of others are often poor original speakers, because they have nothing valuable of their own to say. You can not put the polish of steel on iron. Genuine coins are distinguished from counterfeit by their ring. Young men can not expect to become good speakers by the study of elocution unless their minds are disciplined and stored with thought.

Eloquence deserves to be ranked among the fine arts. Like her sisters, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, and Music, she aims both to please and profit; and as her territory is the widest, so is she the most useful of the family. Oratory is as capable of cultivation as any of the sister arts; and is as rigidly subject to laws which can be investigated and obeyed. If all men had a perfect elocution, their comparative influence on others would depend solely upon the power of their thoughts and emotions. There would still be strong and feeble speakers. But in fact many clear thinkers and warm-hearted speakers produce but little effect, on account of their defective and vicious elocution; while some speakers, feeble in mind and heart, exert superior influence, from their attractive and efficient style of oratory. It is unreasonable and false to assert that this grace, however subtle and mysterious its qualities, can not be analyzed and mastered, and cultivated.

5. *Elocution, as an Art, can be cultivated.*—There is no other art in which the good effect of study and

careful practice has been so frequently and so clearly demonstrated as in oratory. Comparatively few of the greatest orators gave promise of their future success in their first efforts at public speaking. Oratory requires such a combination of faculties and energies, that only after much study and care, as a usual thing, can it be successfully practiced. If we select at random a dozen out of the most eminent speakers in the world, we shall probably find that, in a majority of instances, their earliest efforts at speaking were, in their own estimation, failures. Those who are so destitute of sensibility that they speak passably well without effort seldom improve much upon their juvenile performances.\*

A moderate, endurable style of speaking is easily attainable, especially to a man of fair intelligence and industry, but superiority is seldom manifested, and never long maintained without careful study.

\* The best speakers never lose this sensibility. It is said of the great actor Garrick, that having been summoned to give his testimony before a court, though he had been in the habit of speaking before thousands of people for more than thirty years, he was so embarrassed by his strange situation that the judge in pity dismissed him, as a man from whom no testimony could be obtained. Without such sensibility would he have been Garrick?

## CHAPTER II.

## THE MECHANICAL ELEMENTS OF ELOCUTION.

6. *Articulation.*—ELOCUTION is partly mechanical. There is a certain amount of machinery to be employed in the expression of the language chosen to convey thought and emotion. We must make use of the words agreed upon as symbols of thought. These may be perfectly or incorrectly uttered. In fact, but a small minority of the people, thus far, are in the habit of uttering properly all the sounds belonging to their own language. Some omit some sounds, others other sounds; and the hearer is compelled often to guess out a part of the meaning of the speaker, or to supply the blanks by his own mental effort. Often whole words are lost, still more frequently syllables and parts of syllables are lost, or incorrectly pronounced.

A good articulation, or enunciation, is the first mechanical requisite of Elocution.

By a good articulation we mean the actual audible pronunciation of every sound that properly belongs to the word, or collection of words, purporting to be uttered.

7. *Good Articulation often imperceptibly acquired, and its Absence often unnoticed.*—Fortunate are they who have enjoyed the advantages of good society in childhood, and have thus imperceptibly acquired a correct

pronunciation ; still more fortunate they who have enjoyed good, rigid instruction in early life, in the elements of correct speaking. In no art are the services of a teacher more necessary. Not one person in twenty, who has a defective articulation, seems to be aware of it, or perceives it even after his attention is directed to it. To illustrate what we mean we give an extract from the Bible properly printed, and the same extract as it would be pronounced by some persons who think that they speak the English language.

“To whom hast thou uttered words ? and whose spirit came from thee ? Dead things are formed from under the waters, and the inhabitants thereof. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering. He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.”

Many would read or speak the above thus :

“Toom 'sthou uttered wuds ? ndtoose spi't came fum thee ? Dead things are fo'med f'munder th' waters, nd thnhabitns throf. Hell's naked beforem 'nd 'struction hath no coverin. He stretcheth out th' north over themty place 'nd hangth th' earth upon nuthng.”

Few, perhaps, would make all the errors indicated in the above passage, but many would make some of them, and many a tolerable speaker would be astonished to see his speech phonetically reported in print.

8. *A Common Fault.*—Defective articulation is the most common fault of public speakers. Audiences are obliged to guess the meaning of a large part of what they endeavor to hear, through the ignorance or carelessness of speakers in this particular. Loudness of voice will not compensate for this evil. A man with a correct articulation can be understood almost as far as his voice can be heard. Nothing is more common

than for public speakers to complain of the difficulty of being heard in a room that will not hold more than from five hundred to a thousand people! In all such instances the speakers betray their defective articulation. They show their incompetency for the profession they have chosen. The average voice of a boy twelve years old will make a thousand people hear distinctly, if all the syllables are correctly and evenly pronounced; and any man who professes to be a public speaker ought to be able to make from three to five thousand people hear without difficulty. Men should not presume to address a congregation till they have themselves learned how to talk. A student of music spends much time in playing or singing the scales in all the keys. He can never depend on his ability to strike all the notes in a complicated and rapid combination, unless he has trained himself by this previous practice. So public speakers should keep their vocal organs under control, by practice in actually making all the sounds in the language. If combinations of words or sentences difficult to pronounce, such as are given in many elementary works on Elocution, are not at hand, the end can be attained by the careful loud reading of miscellaneous passages, with special reference to this object. The practice of dictating a catalogue of miscellaneous words to another person some good distance off, to be written, is valuable. Defective or erroneous articulation can not be broken up without the most assiduous effort. If possible, every candidate for public speaking should subject himself to a trustworthy teacher on this subject, to be sure that he is

not the victim of some erroneous habits. With the effort, almost any lisp or improper articulation can be avoided or overcome.

9. *All the Words should be distinctly uttered.*—Upon this subject of distinct speaking it should be observed that the excellency should be exhibited throughout the entire speech. As no chain is stronger than its weakest link, so if a speaker is remarkably distinct in some passages, and inaudible, or his syllables are undistinguishable, in others, the good effect of the whole may be marred. A hearer has a right to claim that a speaker should utter all his words so as to be heard. This first principle of Elocution is the one most frequently and inexcusably violated, and if the study of the art can accomplish nothing else, it can certainly attain to distinct enunciation. On this subject Sheridan well remarks:

“A good articulation consists in giving every letter in a syllable its due proportion of sound, according to the most approved custom of pronouncing it; and in making such a distinction between the syllables of which words are composed, that the ear shall, without difficulty, acknowledge their number, and perceive at once to which syllable each letter belongs. Where these particulars are not observed the articulation is defective.”

10. *Proper Rapidity of Speech.*—After one is sure that he can make all the sounds properly belonging to the language, and with sufficient distinctness, then he should discipline himself to rapid speaking, and to a graceful and indefinable distribution of the voice upon the syl-

lables and words, according to their relative value. Some speakers are so careful to secure a distinct articulation that the least valuable syllables have too much attention. The pronunciation becomes artificial and offensive. It attracts the attention of the hearer as peculiarly precise, and thus defeats its own end. It is the height of art to conceal art. The best pronunciation, like the best style, is that which, like the best window glass, is least noticed. But rapid utterance should never be attempted till correct utterance is perfectly mastered. Every speaker should be able, at will, to speak with great rapidity, or to speak gracefully, very slowly. The rate of speaking varies from about eighty to one hundred and fifty words, on the average, in a minute. Where the thought is easily apprehended and the feelings are excited, there are instances in which the highest effect requires that the words should be poured out in a torrent. In some instances the utterances should be slow, and with long pauses between.

11. *Range of Voice.*—The mechanical part of Elocution requires also a wide range of voice, both in loudness and in pitch.

12. *Good Health required.*—In this respect much depends on the physical constitution. No occupation more requires good health than public speaking. The lungs and throat will not usually be healthy and strong unless the whole bodily system is vigorous. The simple exertion of standing an hour or two is not small; but when to this are added the rapid and almost incessant articulation of words, in various degrees of



loudness, and with various tones of voice, and the gestures or movements of body which the expression of thought and emotion suggests and requires, and the exercise of the brain and the nerves which they demand, we see that good sound health is essential. Public speakers can not keep themselves in proper condition without obedience to the laws of life in food, and clothing, and exercise.

There are innate peculiarities of voice that can not be overcome by training. A tenor voice, for instance, can not be transformed into a bass voice, nor the contrary. No one should seek to change his constitutional peculiarities. Oratory is possible with any voice that can be heard by a sufficient number. If smooth, melodious voices have at first an advantage, a rough voice may be so modulated that all disagreeable impressions from it may disappear, and it is likely, when well trained, to excel a naturally smooth voice in compass. But every speaker may, by appropriate and persevering exercise, increase the range and volume of sound under his command, and also the power to make precise and nice distinctions of tone, appropriate to the various shades of thought and the kind and degrees of feeling.

13. *Adaptation of Voice.*—A public speaker should adapt the amount of voice, and somewhat the distinctness of articulation, to the requirements of the occasion. It betrays an intentional rudeness, or a want of sound sense, for a speaker to address an assembly so as not to be distinctly heard. Many preachers betray their want of training, if not of good judgment, or po-

liteness, by beginning their speaking, or reading, or even public prayers, in so low a voice that many in the assembly might as well be elsewhere. All such persons insult a large part of the assembly, unless their voice is too feeble to reach them, in which case self-respect should compel them to refuse to speak. Of course, it is an exception to this rule when the congregation is too large to be reached by a good voice, or, as is often the case in court, when the speaker intends to be heard only by those in his immediate vicinity.

This requirement of good sense is violated so often that students of Elocution should give it especial attention. All persons who are invited to listen to a public speaker have a right to expect that every word will be uttered with sufficient distinctness and power to be heard by every one of average ability to hear and understand; and a failure to accomplish this shows the speaker not only to be incompetent for his place, but impertinent.

14. *Too loud a Voice.*—The opposite extreme of too loud a voice is not uncommon. The consequences are evil to the speaker, and unpleasant to the hearers. Uniform or protracted loudness wearies the lungs, and unfits the throat for nice variations of tone. It is an effort which nature intends should be made only rarely and briefly. It degenerates usually, if prolonged, into a falsetto screech, or a howl. Only indiscriminating speakers make the mistake of supposing that a very loud sound is needed for the greatest effect. Deep passion seldom so exhibits itself. The engine when most noisy is not accomplishing the most work.

15. *A Natural Manner.*—A speaker, to avoid weariness and the injurious effects of vicious speaking, should express himself naturally, that is to say, with the same kind of variety in the pitch and tone of voice which the most of sensible persons use in good conversation. "Speaking with a tone," as it is often termed, usually consists of the constant and frequent recurrence of the same note in the scale, or the same succession of two or three notes. If the vowel sounds are drawn out a little more than is common, the speaker seems to sing. Sometimes this peculiarity becomes a nasal twang. The misfortune is that few who have these evil habits are aware of it, and that they can not overcome them but by the most assiduous effort. A tone rather betokens hypocrisy than genuine feeling. Men seldom use it when off their guard and deeply in earnest.

16. *Monotony should be Avoided.*—Speaking on the same key of voice will be likely to break down the strongest throat, sooner or later. A man with this habit becomes more weary from one hour's effort, than he would from six hours' steady speaking if he varied the tone of his voice sufficiently often. A man can work ten hours if he has the usual variety of muscular exercise, with less fatigue than would follow from making one simple motion of the arms incessantly for one hour. Speakers should therefore habituate themselves to several distinct pitches of voice, from low to high, and the various degrees of loudness and of rapidity of utterance.

17. *Proper Inflation of the Lungs.*—Let the lungs always be fully inflated with air at the beginning of a

long sentence, and as far as possible keep them all the time inflated. This practical direction is of great value to speakers. In an expiration the lungs are never entirely emptied, but they may be so nearly so that it is impossible to speak easily and loud. In such a case the muscles of the throat and the upper part of the chest do all the work. The result is exhaustion and, often, bronchitis. But let the lungs be full, let the position be erect, and let the speaker pause frequently enough to inflate his lungs fully—not usually through the mouth, but through the nostrils—and the voice comes out easily, the whole chest plays, and the abdominal muscles, as a kind of reserved force, assist the lungs in time of need; and thus a man, with suitable variations of tone and rapidity, can address a thousand people for several hours without bodily weariness, and repeat the exercise daily without harm. Speak naturally, variously, and with fully expanded lungs, thus using the abdominal muscles, and so far from producing bronchitis, public speaking will be found to be its most efficient preventive, and even remedy. This should not be called “preachers’ sore throat,” but “poor speakers’ sore throat.”

18. *A Correct Pronunciation.*—It seems almost superfluous to call attention to correctness of pronunciation, as one of the mechanical elements of Elocution. Sometimes, but rarely, does a mispronunciation of a word—an error in accent or in the sound of a syllable—mislead the hearer, but it always betokens that the speaker is ignorant of the right way. If one pronounces many words incorrectly he will be regarded as an

ignorant man; his opinion, especially on matters that require scholarship and attention to nice particulars, will not be so highly esteemed as though he were habitually correct.

19. *Proper Positions of the Body.*—The bodily positions assumed by the speaker have an influence upon the hearers, and, reciprocally, upon the speaker, and thus constitute an element of mechanical Elocution. For the most part, the body should be naturally erect, so as to give full play to the lungs and throat, but not excessively and unyieldingly so, thus indicating haughtiness or pride. If the weight is supported chiefly upon the left foot, with the right foot a little advanced, and right knee slightly bent, the body is in the best natural position to furnish an easy play for the right hand in gesture. A similar resting upon the right foot is an equally easy position, furnishing an easy play for the left hand. Animated speaking will naturally lead to an advance of the foot that was partially unoccupied, now resting the principal weight upon it, and communicating to the person an appearance of deep earnestness. Any position not uncouth or awkward, or too persistently maintained, is allowable. Speaking behind a high desk which conceals the most of the person, and is often leaned upon, leads to pernicious habits of position, and often deprives what is uttered of a great part of its effect. Speakers should not be separated from audiences by a fence. If the fence exists, let the speaker, as far as possible, ignore it.

20. *Gesticulation.*—Gesticulation may, to a narrow

extent, be an element of natural language. There are gestures instinctively acknowledged to be significant. The open hand betokens generosity and favor; the clenched hand earnestness, sometimes defiance; the quivering hand excitement and zeal. No explanation is needed of such gestures as pointing in any direction, looking upward or downward, striking with the hand, or stamping with the foot. If by private practice the student has disciplined himself to a variety of movements, not constrained but free and easy, the motions that will be spontaneously assumed under the influence of excited feeling will be the best for him to employ. An impassive, immobile style of speaking is the most reprehensible. The speaker is not a machine to grind out words mechanically. There should be some good reason why the people would rather hear than read his speech. If he has earnestness, or any emotion, it will show itself in the voice, the eye, the position, the movements of the hands, and arms, and feet, and the whole body. The body of an orator should be, for the time, an obedient servant of the mind. It should not be trammelled by any awkward habits, but yield itself to the expression of thought and emotion.

At the same time excessive gesture is more disagreeable than deficiency. It soon satiates and disgusts. It reacts against the speaker, and calls attention away from the words uttered to the manner, which is fatal to all genuine eloquence.

## CHAPTER III.

## INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL ELEMENTS OF ELOCUTION.

21. *Intellectual Character of Elocution.*—ELOCUTION is far more comprehensive and subtle in its laws and powers than would appear simply from those mechanical elements already described. It is pre-eminently intellectual and emotional. It is the art by which mind and heart produce the greatest effect on mind and heart. It is almost inexhaustible in its resources, and makes subservient to its purposes nearly all modes of acting upon the human soul.

22. *Relation of Sound to Thought.*—Consider first its relation to sounds. Some sounds intrinsically suggest certain thoughts and feelings. It is not a matter of association, but of intuition. Even a young animal can distinguish between a call, and a cry of alarm and warning, made by its mother. Is a human being inferior, in this matter, to a brute? Does a child need to be taught that the roar of a lion or the barking of a dog is disagreeable, that the hissing of a snake is hateful, or that the singing of a bird is melodious? How early does an infant distinguish the meaning of the various voices of the mother! In these facts we see the germ of music, whose wondrous power has been the theme of many an oration and poem.

But, developed in a different direction, sounds made by the human voice become significant, wholly independent of the meaning arbitrarily associated with words. There is a certain amount of vocal language without articulation. A man who speaks only a foreign language can communicate many ideas by his voice. A new word invented for the occasion, or a word of another language not understood, may be so uttered, or intoned, as to indicate successively a request, a command, pleasure, pain, laughter, indignation, and scorn. Indeed were men confined to inarticulate language, it might, by culture, become no mean vehicle of thought and emotion. It is said that a noted actor, by the repetition of the word Mesopotamia, could make many of his hearers shed tears. Sounds alone, especially musical notes, can awaken, or subdue, or modify passion. It is not a matter of fashion or caprice, that public prayers are intoned, or uttered in a peculiar voice, which would be ridiculously inappropriate in conversation or in a secular oration. There are peculiar tones of voice appropriate to the expression, respectively, of plaintive emotion, entreaty, love, reverence, fear, anger, authority, surprise, awe, instruction, suggestion, denial, resolution, and almost all other passions and states of the mind.

23. *Employment of this Principle by Oratory.*—The accomplished orator uses these various tones and kinds of voice, and blends their influence with the meaning of the words which he utters. A sentence uttered by him means little or much, as he desires to have it. It



may communicate a thrill of emotion to an audience that can not be seen in the mere words spoken. The speeches of good orators, when printed, seldom show the secret of their power.

24. *Slides, Accents, Tones of Voice.*—In speech this power of impressing others by the voice is not lost, but should be legitimately exercised. This is the foundation of the various slides and stresses and accents and tones of the voice, which are detected in the most efficient speaking, and are systematically described in elementary treatises on Elocution.

The voice, it is evident, must preserve one uniform monotone, or slide upward, or slide downward in speech. In fact, when well employed, in the utterance of thought and emotion, it maintains, at intervals, all these three modes. In the use of direct questions, that can be answered by Yes or No, it properly assumes the rising inflection; but if the question is not designed to be answered, nor even to suggest any want of information or any doubt on the part of the speaker, it assumes the falling inflection. Observe the very different sentiment expressed by this question: "Will you cut down this tree?" when uttered first with the rising inflection and then with the falling inflection.

25. *Emphatic Pauses.*—The slides, whether upward or downward, tend to lengthen the syllable on which they are uttered, and are consequently followed by a pause, longer or shorter, according to their frequency and the emotion of the speaker. Pauses of suspension, or when the sense is not complete, or, in a long sentence, the last pause but one, and expressions of

tender emotion, all naturally assume the rising inflection. Indirect questions, the completion of the sense, all expressions that do not suggest a continuance of expression to bring out the thought, require a falling inflection.

It would be useless to present a thorough analysis of this subject without many examples, but all who purpose to excel as public speakers should thoroughly practice the examples given by some extended work on this subject, and test for themselves the effect on their own mind and heart of the directions given. Practice is needed to give compass to the voice in its intonations as well as in its volume, for if all the various modulations of voice have been once thoroughly made in practice, they will be likely spontaneously to arise in actual work.

26. *Attention to Rule need not embarrass a Speaker.*—Whately says that, a speaker's "attention being fixed on his own voice, the inevitable consequence would be that he would betray more or less his studied and artificial delivery." Not at all. Apprentices are always awkward till they become familiar with their tools. No man is a first-class speaker till he becomes so absorbed in his subject as to lose all active self-consciousness, but then, in the highest heat of earnestness, he will act not only according to nature, but according to previously-formed habits of position, voice, intonation, gesticulation, and all other modes of expression. It would be well therefore to study and execute all the variations of voice pointed out in some elementary treatise on the subject, repeatedly and

thoroughly, till the vocal apparatus is rendered flexible and manageable, and then, when actually speaking an original production, utterly to abandon all thought of intonation.\* The great deficiency of many speakers arises from the fact that they have never actually made all the various sounds that full speaking requires, and therefore when a passion is excited it has no adequate mode of representation. In this sense many public speakers are partially dumb. Their vocabulary of intonation is narrow. Their voice and body are poor and inefficient machines. They may have power, but it is concealed from others, perhaps from themselves. As gymnastic exercises train the body for any demand for exertion that may arise in practical life, so a rigid and thorough investigation and practice of all the various kinds and degrees of voice secures to the speaker an exhaustless reservoir from which he may draw as the occasion demands. It would be well even for accomplished and successful speakers frequently to review the elements of Elocution, and to keep themselves in practice, just as the most successful musicians do in their art.

27. *True Eloquence requires a noble Character.*—But Elocution embraces an element still higher than the mechanical part, and an intellectual appreciation of the power of voice and manner. It is pre-eminently a virtue, and summons to its aid all modes of legitimate influence by which mind acts upon mind. A

\* Part I. of the "Fifth Reader of the School and Family Series, by Marcids Willson," contains an excellent summary and illustration of the elements of Elocution.

speaker needs to be respected by his hearers for sincerity, ability, earnestness, and power. He must be, or be believed to be, what he seems. Otherwise he is only an actor, and though he may be eloquent as such, the people are merely amused or entertained. Words spoken stammeringly and awkwardly by a man of solid worth have great power which no graces of enunciation can communicate to a man of intellectual imbecility or moral unworthiness. On this subject Daniel Webster well said :

28. *Opinion of Webster on this Subject.*—"When public bodies are to be addressed on momentous occasions, when great interests are at stake, and strong passions excited, nothing is valuable in speech, further than it is connected with high intellectual and moral endowments. Clearness, force, and earnestness are the qualities which produce conviction. True eloquence indeed, does not consist in speech ; it can not be brought from far. Labor and learning may toil for it, but they toil for it in vain ; words and phrases may be marshalled in every way, but they can not compass it ; it must exist in the man, in the subject, and in the occasion. Affected passion, intense expression, the pomp of declamation—all may aspire after it ; they can not reach it : it comes, if it come at all, like the outbreking of a fountain from the earth, or the bursting forth of volcanic fires, with spontaneous, original, native force."

29. *Opinion of Milton.*—Milton also, whose training in the schools was the best that his country and age could afford, eloquently says :

"For me, readers, although I can not say that I am utterly untrained in those rules which best rhetoricians have given, or unacquainted with those examples which the prime authors of eloquence have written in any learned tongue; yet true eloquence I find to be none but the serious and hearty love of truth; and that whose mind soever is fully possessed with a fervent desire to know good things, and with the dearest charity to infuse the knowledge of them into others, when such a man would speak, his words (by what I can express), like so many nimble and airy servitors, trip about him at command, and in well-ordered files, as he would wish, fall aptly into their own places."

30. *Extemporaneous Speaking*.—Here may be a proper place again to urge the value of extemporaneous speaking. Reading should not encroach upon the domain of oratory. Good extemporaneous speaking requires thorough preparation. It is well, in the process of training for it, to write out, in full, passages, if not entire addresses, to be spoken, and thoroughly to commit them to memory. Soon it will be easy to commit to memory the thoughts and facts, leaving the language to be at least partly spontaneous, and also to interpolate entirely extemporaneous passages. Thus the art can be acquired by study and practice.

Extemporaneous speakers will be likely occasionally to fail, and often to fall below their desires and what they believe to be their ability, but the joys and influence of success will more than compensate for these disappointments.

Too great facility in extemporaneous speech often

defeats the highest success. Naturally easy speakers, as they are termed, who extemporize volubly without study, are usually narrow in their range, shallow in their thoughts, and repetitious, and bring a reproach on their art. Speakers who discard the use of the manuscript before the audience should spend more labor in preparation than would be necessary previously to write out their addresses.

31. *Practical Rules of Elocution.* — The following rules embrace the most valuable general principles of Elocution :

(1.) Be thoroughly prepared for the work which you intend to perform. If to read the production of another person, let it be studied beforehand, so that you are sure of comprehending and feeling fully the thoughts and emotions of the author. If to read your own production, be as independent as possible of the manuscript. If to speak from memory, let it be so well committed as to require no conscious effort to recall it. If to speak extemporaneously, be sure that you have an abundant supply of material on hand, with the general arrangement or order thoroughly at command. Whoever faithfully obeys this rule, when possible, will be ready to make an efficient speech, even when he has no opportunity to prepare for it.

(2.) As far as possible be unwearied, and in good physical and mental condition, and be deliberate and self-possessed, remembering that if you have a right to speak, it is too late when on the floor to entertain any doubts about the matter, and that self-possession is a prime requisite of successful oratory.

(3.) Enunciate distinctly and loud enough, in all you say, to be heard by all whom you wish to address, and do not allow yourself to speak for a long time with such excessive energy of voice and manner as to react on yourself, and loosen your hold upon the audience, and remember the advantage of speaking with fully inflated lungs.

(4.) Be thoroughly in earnest. Avoid unnecessary repetitions, and seek brevity.

(5.) Though entirely absorbed in the subject, and unconscious of rules, except only so far as to prevent you from glaringly violating them, still persistently oppose and break up any known evil habit of position, gesture, or intonation.

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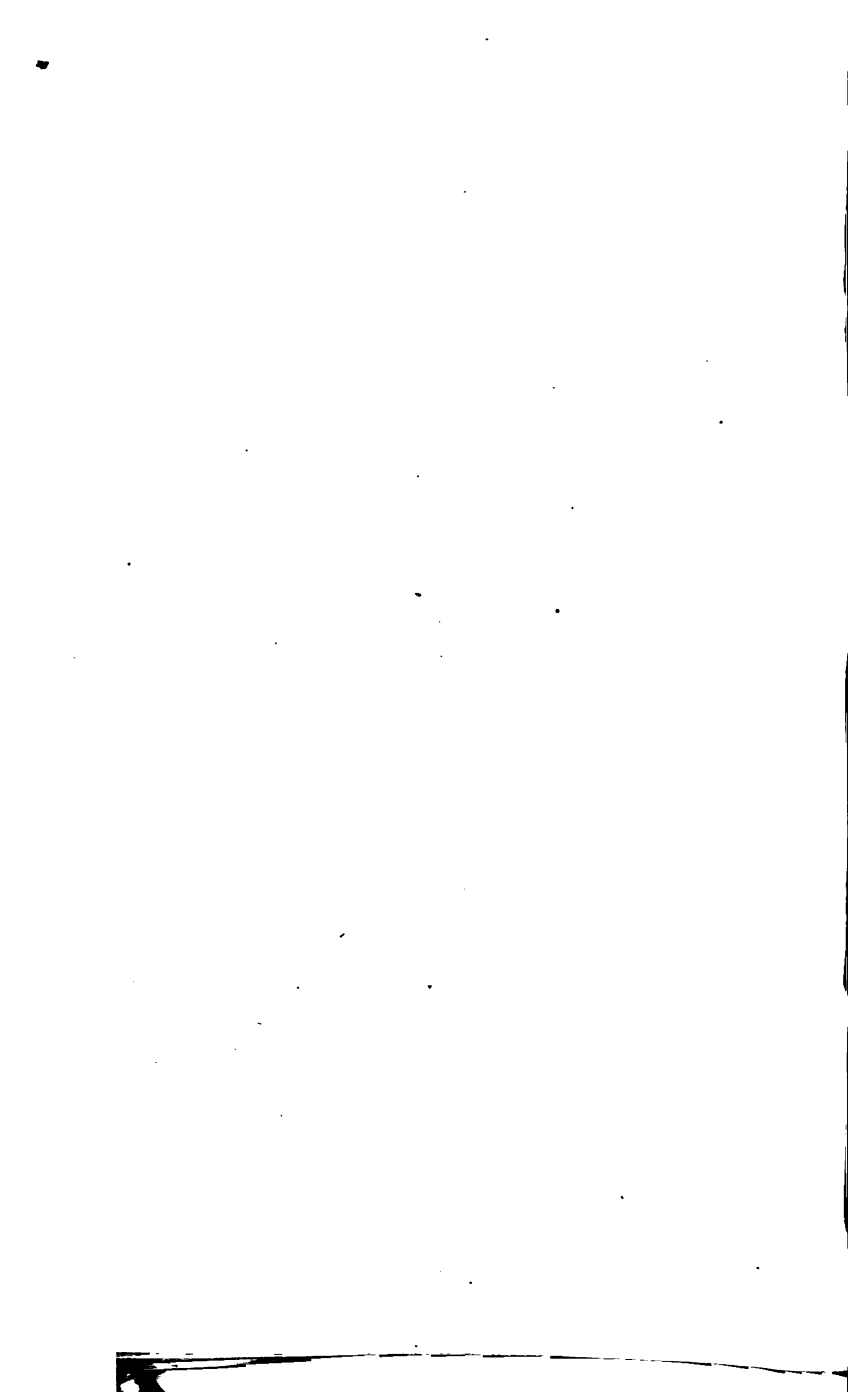
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